

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL FACTORS RELATED TO RETENTION  
OF COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS EMPLOYED BY TEXAS COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION

A Record of Study

by

GALEN DOUGLAS CHANDLER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

December 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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December 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

## ABSTRACT

## Organizational and Individual Factors Related to Retention of County Extension Agents

Employed by Texas Cooperative Extension. (December 2004)

Galen Douglas Chandler, B.S., Texas A&M University;

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The purpose of this study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension. The population for the study included 419 Texas county Extension agents employed for at least three years. The response rate for the web-based questionnaire was 87% or 364 respondents. The Likert-type scale instrument consisted of thirty-eight questions divided into four sections: eleven organizational factors; ten individual work related factors; five individual non-work related; and twelve demographic questions. Each section had one open-ended question for the respondents to comment. Employee turnover is costly to any organization as costs can be as high as over 100% of the employee's annual salary. Retention of employees is important, not only, for economic reasons but to provide a quality product or service without interruption of services during an employee's vacancy.

Of the respondents, 58% of the county Extension agents have been employed for more than eleven years and 35% have worked for over twenty years. 89% of the county Extension agents have served in more than one county during their tenure and of those 298, 56% have served in more than three counties.

The four, most important retention factors identified by county Extension agents were: interesting work; variety of work/scheduling; opportunity to contribute to my community; and personal satisfaction.

There was a very strong relationship between recognition from supervisor and the understanding/fairness of supervisor as a reason why county Extension agents choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension.

The recommendations from the study should be considered by Extension administration to put into practice to decrease employee turnover and increase retention among Texas county Extension agent.

## DEDICATION

This record of study is dedicated to my loving wife, Robin, and son, Cody, who were supportive throughout this four year process of obtaining this doctorate degree. Without their understanding and willingness to give up of their time with me, this project could not have been completed. Robin's patience and willingness to help when asked has been appreciated. Unfortunately she has been on the receiving end of many of my frustrations and has been willing to talk through most of them to keep me on track to complete the project and goal.

I also want to thank my parents, Doug and Marilyn Chandler and my father and mother in-law, George and Grady Ann McAllister for being interested in my progress of this doctorate degree over the past four years.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study .....	3
Specific Objectives .....	4
Theoretical Base for Study.....	4
Research Question .....	7
Delimitations.....	7
Limitations .....	7
Basic Assumptions.....	8
Definition of Terms.....	8
II LITERATURE REVIEW .....	12
Employee Turnover in Private Industry.....	12
Extension Turnover.....	18
Business Retention.....	22
Extension Retention.....	35
III METHOD OF INVESTIGATION .....	38
Overview of the Study .....	38
Population.....	38
Instrument.....	39
Pilot Test.....	40
Data Collection.....	41
Data Analysis.....	42

CHAPTER	Page
IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....	44
Results for Objective One .....	44
Results for Objective Two .....	49
Results for Objective Three .....	58
Results for Objective Four .....	62
V SUMMARY OF STUDY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	83
Summary of Study .....	83
Summary and Conclusions for Objective One .....	86
Summary and Conclusions for Objective Two .....	87
Summary and Conclusions for Objective Three .....	89
Summary and Conclusions for Objective Four .....	90
Study Implications .....	92
Recommendations for Program Direction .....	93
Recommendations for Further Research .....	97
REFERENCES .....	99
APPENDIX A-QUESTIONNAIRE .....	104
APPENDIX B-E-MAIL NOTIFICATION AND THANK YOU LETTERS ....	110
APPENDIX C-ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS- OPEN ENDED COMMENTS .....	119
APPENDIX D-INDIVIDUAL WORK RELATED FACTORS—OPEN ENDED COMMENTS .....	134
APPENDIX E -INDIVIDUAL NON—WORK RELATED FACTORS—OPEN ENDED COMMENTS .....	142
APPENDIX F-REASONS FOR SERIOUSLY THINKING OF LEAVING EXTENSION FOR ANOTHER JOB OPPORTUNITY— OPEN ENDED COMMENTS .....	148
VITA .....	162



## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1 A Model of Voluntary Turnover of OSU Extension Agents .....	20
2 Strategic Accountability Model .....	23

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1 Texas Cooperative Extension Turnover Rate, Percentages, and Most Common Reasons for Leaving Employment .....	3
2 Turnover Costs Summary.....	15
3 Dissatisfaction with Job-Related Conditions .....	19
4 What Are the Reasons You Stay at Your Present Job?.....	25
5 Gender, Marital Status, Children, and Ethnicity Profiles That Characterize the County Extension Agents Who Choose to Stay in Extension.....	45
6 Title, years of service, and category county profiles of County Extension Agents who choose to stay in Extension .....	47
7 Career Profile for County Extension Agents Who Choose to Stay in Extension .....	49
8 Frequency Analysis to Determine Organization Factors of Why County Extension Agents Choose to Stay in Extension .....	51
9 Frequency Analysis to Determine Individual Work Related Factors of Why County Extension Agents Choose to Stay in Extension.....	53
10 Frequency Analysis to Determine Individual Non-Work Related Factor of Why County Extension Agents Choose to Stay in Extension.....	54
11 Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Organizational Factors .....	55
12 Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Individual Work Related Factors .....	56
13 Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Individual Non-Work Related Factors .....	57

## TABLE

## Page

14	Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Reasons to Leave Extension.....	58
15	Nature and Strength of Relationships Between Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents .....	59
16	Nature and Strength of Relationships Between Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents .....	61
17	Nature and Strength of Relationships Between Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents .....	62
18	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender .....	63
19	Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender .....	64
20	Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender.....	64
21	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Have Children.....	65
22	Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Have Children.....	65
23	Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Have Children.....	66
24	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice .....	66
25	Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice .....	67
26	Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice.....	67

## TABLE

## Page

27	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Served in More than One County .....	68
28	Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Served in More Than One County .....	68
29	Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Served in More Than One County .....	69
30	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Seriously Thought About Leaving Extension .....	69
31	Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Seriously Thought About Leaving Extension .....	70
32	Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Seriously Thought About Leaving Extension .....	70
33	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Left Extension Then Later Rehired .....	71
34	Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Left Extension Then Later Rehired .....	71
35	Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Left Extension Then Later Rehired .....	72
36	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status .....	72
37	Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status .....	73
38	Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status .....	73
39	Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Ethnicity .....	74

TABLE	Page
40 Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Ethnicity .....	74
41 Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Ethnicity .....	75
42 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Job Title.....	76
43 Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Job Title.....	76
44 Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Job Title .....	77
45 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed .....	77
46 Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed.....	78
47 Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed.....	78
48 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Category County Served .....	79
49 Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Category County Served .....	80
50 Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Category County Served .....	80
51 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by How Many Counties Served .....	81
52 Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by How Many Counties Served .....	81
53 Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by How Many Counties Served .....	82

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

Retention of valued employees is one of the most important management concerns in businesses, organizations, and government agencies. Employee retention means to keep in one's pay or service (Merriam-Webster, 1974). Texas Cooperative Extension is a state agency of the Texas A&M University System headquartered in College Station, Texas. The agency's mission is to provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas. Texas Cooperative Extension employs approximately 600 county Extension agents in 248 of the 254 counties in the state. County Extension agents are valued by Extension administration and it is important to retain agents in the counties to plan, implement, evaluate, and interpret educational programs to the people of the state of Texas. When staff vacancies occur, it costs the organization in many ways: high cost of training and development, lost work time during a vacancy, time spent and burnout from coworkers attempting to fill void of other agents during a vacancy, time spent from supervisors with the orientation of new employees, and decreased service and educational programming to clientele because of the vacancy.

There have been numerous cost calculators developed to determine the actual costs and estimates of employee turnover. There are two costs calculators from the University of Wisconsin Extension (Pinkovitz, Moskal, & Green, 2003) and the Saratoga

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This record of study follows the style and format of the *Journal of Agricultural Education*.

Institute (Arthur, 2001) that calculate the actual costs of turnover, which is inclusive of many direct and indirect costs. An example of a cost estimator lists jobs with different skill levels and assigns a turnover cost range based upon the expertise level required of the job (Phillips and Connell, 2003).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There have been few studies conducted to determine why county Extension agents choose to stay employed and make Extension their professional career. As mentioned in the introduction, turnover rates are costly to organizations and businesses that lose employees when they are not satisfied with their current employer and decide to move on to other job and career opportunities. As shown in Table 1, over the past five years, the county Extension turnover rate for Texas Cooperative Extension has ranged from 8% to 14% and has averaged 11%. Texas Cooperative Extension has data about why employees leave employment with the educational agency through a voluntary survey sent to former employees after their termination. The most common reasons for leaving Extension as stated by those who have left has not varied over the past five years and include getting a better job, personal reasons, and retirement (McConnell, 2001). For those who leave the cost to the agency can be tremendous and takes away from educational program efforts. As an example of the costs to the agency, for a county Extension agent whose salary is \$30,000, the costs could range from \$7,185 to \$30,000, depending on the cost estimator or calculator used.

Extension administration is concerned about the implications of why county Extension agents who choose to leave. Determining why agents leave is important, but to

determine why they choose to stay and promote these reasons will have long term benefits to the organization to maintain productive employees who will deliver the high quality educational programs the people of Texas want and deserve.

Table 1  
*Texas Cooperative Extension Turnover Rate, Percentages, and Most Common Reasons for Leaving Employment*

Year	% Turnover rate	Number of employees leaving	3 Most common reasons
1998	8.17	49	Better job/personal reasons/retire
1999	9.00	54	Better job/personal reasons/retire
2000	13.83	83	Better job/personal reasons /retire
2001	12.33	74	Retire/better job/personal reasons
2002	11.17	67	Better job/retire/personal reasons

Retention of employees is important to all businesses and organizations to keep a productive workforce. The cost to the organization is an obvious reason for retention, but the quality of the product or service is a more important reason. This study can have far reaching effects on Extension as Extension administration is interested in retaining the most productive, talented, creative, innovative county Extension agents to provide the highest quality educational programs to the people of Texas.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension.



### **Specific Objectives**

There were four objectives of the study: 1) Describe the demographic factors among county Extension agents who choose to stay in Extension, 2) Determine the factors of why county Extension agents decide to stay in Extension, 3) Determine the nature and strength of various relationships between the factors of retention of county Extension agents, and 4) Determine the best predictors of why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension.

### **Theoretical Base for Study**

The theoretical base for this study centers on the work of several noted experts in the field of job turnover and retention. Studies conducted by (Clark, 1981; Lindner, 1998; Mobley, 1982; Outreach & Extension, 2001; & Schwartz, 2001) served as the foundation of this study and provided the necessary background to emphasize the importance of the study.

According to Schwartz (2001), there are literally thousands of articles, research, books, lectures, etc. on the issue of job satisfaction and retention of employees. Small business and large corporations are interested in retaining high quality and most importantly highly effective employees who will remain with the company for their entire career. People really want and need a variety of things from employers. Such things as; career growth; challenging and meaningful work; to work with good people; recognition and appreciation for work well done; opportunities to contribute ideas on work processes; flexibility in work hours; and lastly they want fair pay, good benefits and job security are important.

Many business managers today complain about high workforce turnover. Retail establishments that rely on low-wage employees typically expect to have a higher turnover than other businesses. However, in today's tight labor markets, high-wage, salaried positions in professional companies are often flipping nearly as fast as low-wage jobs. There are many small things that can be done by businesses to retain good employees. Such things as making sure the manager spends time with all employees; paying attention to what employees do; and asking employees what the company can do for them to make it a better place to work are a few things businesses can do to retain employees (Outreach and Extension, 2001). There are small subtle things employers, supervisors, and managers can do which seem small but can make an impact on employees to retain them.

While money and salary is important to most employees, in many cases it is not the driving force behind why employees stay with organizations. Dickson (1973) found that employees are not solely motivated by money and employee behavior is linked to their attitudes. The employee's attitudes will vary, but what determines their positive and negative attitudes is what employers can put into practice to encourage the employee to stay with the organization.

Understanding employee motivation and how it relates to job retention and turnover rate was considered in a study done by Lindner (1998). The factors which motivated employees to stay with Extension included such things as; interesting work, good wages, appreciation for work done, job security, good working conditions, promotions and growth in the organization, being in on decisions, the organization being loyal to employees, tactful discipline, and being sympathetic about personal problems.

Several studies noted that the effectiveness of Extension is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Buford, 1990; Chesney, 1982, & Smith, 1990). Knowing what motivates employees and incorporating this knowledge into the reward system will help Extension identify, recruit, employ, train, and retain a productive work force. Motivating employees requires both managers and employees working together (Buford, 1993). Extension employees must be willing to let managers know what motivates them, and managers must be willing to design reward systems which motivates employees. Employee studies, research, and questionnaires are extremely useful in helping Extension managers determine what motivates employees (Bowen & Radhakrishna, 1991).

The impact of turnover is especially apparent in educational organizations like Extension, where the bulk of the organizational production system is dependent upon its employees (Clark, 1981). The production system is the educational program development process planned, delivered, and interpreted by county Extension agents. The disruption of service to clientele, the extra time and money spent on recruitment and training of the replacement and the added stress of more work for the remaining staff during the interim are a few of the consequences suffered by the organization when turnover occurs. For the individual, leaving a job may have caused temporary loss of income and benefits, family stress, problems with individual self-esteem, and possibly sustained unemployment and relocation for the individual and family (Mobley, 1982).

It appears turnover rate percentage is a relative term and there are some occupations where a high turnover is expected. Turnover rate is relatively low for Texas Extension employees partially because of the comprehensive staff-training program and

professional improvement opportunities that equip staff members to perform their jobs well (The University of Texas, 1999).

### **Research Question**

The research question was: What organizational and individual job retention factors are relevant for a Texas county Extension agent to decide to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension and to choose service and education as a professional career?

### **Delimitations**

This study is delimited to the 419 Texas county Extension agents with Texas Cooperative Extension who have been employed for at least three years in the spring of 2004. The county Extension agents included in the study have the following job designations: agriculture, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth development, horticulture, integrated pest management, marine, community development, urban development, expanded nutrition, urban youth development, and health education.

### **Limitations**

The study was limited to those county Extension agents who had been employed at least three years with Texas Cooperative Extension. It is believed an employee decides within this time period if he or she is planning to make Extension a professional career. No study was found to determine whether this is the correct decision time for agents who

plan to stay with Extension. Another limitation was the time of year when the electronic questionnaire was sent via email to the population of county Extension agents. It was sent in the spring of 2004—a busy time of year for agricultural and 4-H agents because of the county and major livestock show season and crop planting season. Also, the researcher did not consider those county Extension agents who have left Texas Cooperative Extension.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The study assumed all county Extension agents had access to a computer and the Internet to receive and respond to the electronic questionnaire. The second assumption was that all agents would respond to the questionnaire in a timely manner or at least within two weeks of the initial transmission. Finally, it was assumed there was no difference between agent response times to the electronic questionnaire and the response rate.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Baby Boomers:** People born from 1946-1964 whose current age range from 38-57 years old (Muson, 2003).

**County Extension Agents:** Employees of Texas Cooperative Extension who serve as professional county educators in 248 of the 254 counties in the state of Texas.

**Generation Xer's:** People born from 1965-1977 whose current age ranges from 25-38 years old (Muson, 2003).

Job Sculpting: The art of matching people to jobs that allow their deeply embedded life interests to be expressed (Butler & Waldroop, 2001).

Job Titles of County Extension Agents: The job designation of Texas county Extension agents which reflects the agent's major job responsibility. Example: for a county Extension agent-family and consumer sciences (CEA-FCS), the agent's primary responsibility is to be educational program leader for all areas (both youth and adult) in areas such as; family nutrition, finances, health, and parenting. The other job designations are as follows: County Extension agent-agriculture (CEA-Ag); county Extension agent-4-H (CEA-4-H); county Extension agent-marine (CEA-M); county Extension agent-natural resource (CEA-NR); county Extension agent-communication (CEA-COMM); Extension agent-integrated pest management (EA-IPM); county Extension agent –urban development (CEA-UD); county Extension agent-urban youth development (CEA-UYD); county Extension agent-health education (CEA-HE); Extension agent-expanded nutrition program (EA-ENP); and county extension agent-horticulture (CEA-HORT).

Employee Retention: Is to keep in one's pay or service (Merriam- Webster, 1974).

Employee Turnover: Cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who receives monetary compensation from the organization (Mobley, 1982).

Texas Cooperative Extension: Texas A&M University system agency which provides quality, relevant, outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas.

Texas Cooperative Extension County Categories: The grouping of Texas counties that reflect the complexity, difficulty, and workload of county Extension agents responsible for a major Extension program. The weighted factors are as follows: total county population (35%); total county income (35%); total agricultural income (10%); and number of farms (20%). The latest revision was done in 2002 and there are seven categories: 1 being the smallest rural county (King County) and 7 being the largest urban county such as Harris County (McConnell, 2002).

Professional Scheduling: The opportunity for a professional to work flexible hours when needed.

Organizational Job Retention Factors: Organizational factor listed in the questionnaire sent to county Extension agents including; opportunities for promotion/advancement, variety of work/scheduling, office environment/facilities/equipment, quality of support staff, recognition of supervisor, understanding/fairness of supervisor, benefit/retirement package, salary, job security, quality/support from Extension specialists, and no direct supervisor managing my work regularly.

Individual Work Job Retention Factors: Individual work related factors listed in the questionnaire sent to county Extension agents including; manageable workload, interesting work, opportunity to travel on the job, recognition from clientele served, opportunities for professional development, professional scheduling, personal satisfaction, professional relationships with co-workers and peer through professional associations, opportunity to be creative through challenging work, and opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H.

Individual Non-Work Job Retention Factors: Individual non-work related factors listed in the questionnaire sent to county Extension agents including; opportunity for personal growth and development, opportunity for outside business/financial interests, professional status in the community, opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders, and the opportunity to be involved in my community.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Employee Turnover in Private Industry**

There are myths about employee turnover which surface in organizations and often inhibit efforts to manage retention in a proactive way. Common myths which inhibit organizations are such things as, turnover costs are not too high, turnover is just the cost of doing business, turnover has many positive consequences, turnover is an industry problem, turnover is a human resource problem, the manager's role is minimal, turnover is out of control, throwing money at the problem will solve it, and turnover is a tactical issue only (Phillips and Connell, 2003).

Mobley (1982) defines employee turnover as the cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who received monetary compensation from the organization. The causes of turnover in organizations are generally attributed to four classes of determinants; economy, organizational, individual work, and non-work related. The first determinant, economy, is comprised of external factors, such as availability of jobs and unemployment levels. Organizational factors, such as supervisory style, pay, job content, reward system, and work environment comprise the second determinant. Individual factors make up the last two classes of determinants. Individual work factors are related to job values, expectations, and abilities of the individual. Lastly, individual non-work factors are such factors as a spouse's career, family considerations, and leisure preferences of the individual employee.

Art Lucas of the Lucas Group (Chambers, 2001) reported that from his experiences in dealing with people, organizations, and business that one of the primary reasons people leave jobs is not for the money. The primary reason is because the employee does not feel they are appreciated enough for the job they do for the

organization. They do not feel that their manager or organization respects and values them for the contribution they make. People will also leave if an exciting challenge comes their way, but most leave because they are not treated well. Some companies are difficult to recruit from because they do a good job in making their employees feel valued, while others are easy to recruit from because they do not treat their employees well. To retain people, there has to be a lot of organizational caring. People must know that you are really in their corner and you are trying to work with them to develop their career and make them happy with their job. The employees must be paid well and feel they are on a winning team with close co-worker comradeship.

Mobley (1982) said effective management of turnover requires examination of the entire human resource management process, including recruitment, selection, early socialization, job design, compensation, supervision, career planning, working conditions and schedules. Turnover does not only affect the business as an organization, but the individual or the employee is affected personally as well.

According to Phillips & Connell (2003), although every manager and team member is aware of problems associated with turnover, a review of its major consequences puts retention in the proper perspective. Some of the negative consequences are as follows: high financial cost, survival, exit problems, productivity losses and workflow interruptions, service quality, loss of expertise, loss of business opportunities, administrative problems, disruption of social and communication networks, job satisfaction of remaining employees, and image of the organization. There are also negative impacts on the individual, particularly if a person is leaving because of problems that could have been prevented. Some negative consequences could be the loss of employee benefits or job security, stress associated with the transition and change, financial difficulties, loss of social network, relocation costs, wasted efforts and uncompleted projects, and career problems. There are many cost calculators available to determine all direct and indirect costs to businesses and organizations associated with

employee turnover costs. Three turnover cost calculators and estimators were used in this research study. Fortunately, many detailed turnover cost studies have been developed in organizations and published in the literature. Because so much is published, many organizations do not need to use resources to conduct a fully loaded cost study. Table 2 presents some selected turnover cost data captured from dozens of impact studies. The data are arranged by job category, ranging from entry-level, non skilled jobs to middle managers. The ranges represent the cost of turnover as a percentage of base pay of the job group. The costs included in these studies are fully loaded to include exit cost of previous employee, recruiting, selection, orientation, initial training, wages, and salaries while in training, lost productivity, quality problems, customer dissatisfaction, loss of expertise/knowledge, supervisor's time for turnover, and temporary replacement costs (Phillips and Connell, 2003).

For a Texas county Extension agent whose salary is \$30,000, the estimated cost to the Texas Cooperative Extension could range from \$7185 to \$30,000, depending on which turnover cost estimator is utilized.

Table 2  
*Turnover Costs Summary*

Job Type/Category	Turnover Cost Rang (Percentage of Annual Wage/Salary)*
Entry level - Hourly, nonskilled (e.g., fast food worker)	30-50
Service/production workers - Hourly (e.g., courier)	40-70
Skilled hourly (e.g., machinist)	75-100
Clerical/administrative (e.g. scheduler)	50-80
Professional (e.g., sales representative, nurse, accountant)	75-125
Technical (e.g., computer technician)	100-150
Engineers (e.g., chemical engineer)	200-300
Specialists (e.g., computer software designer)	200-400
Supervisors/team Leaders (e.g., section supervisor)	100-150
Middle managers (e.g., department manager)	125-200

*Note.* Percentages are rounded to reflect the general range of costs from studies. Costs are fully loaded to include all of the costs of replacing an employee and bringing him/her to the level of productivity and efficiency of the former employee.

*Note.* From *managing employee retention: A strategic accountability approach* (p.69), by J. J. Phillips and A. D. Connell, 2003, Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann. Copyright 2003 by Franklin Covey.

According to an online employee turnover cost calculator, which considers costs associated with separation, vacancy, replacement, and training costs, turnover for a county Extension agent is \$7185/year/employee (Pinkovitz, Moskal, & Green, 2003). This is based upon a salary of \$30,000. Another cost calculator discussed by Arthur (2001), provides a formula for estimating the cost of turnover. The average cost of turnover is 25 % of an employee's annual salary, plus the cost of benefits. Typically, benefits come to approximately 30 percent of wages. With this formula, for a county Extension agent earning \$30,000, the following calculation provides an estimate of the cost of turnover.

Annual wage:  $\$30,000 \times .25 = \$7,500$

Annual wage:  $\$30,000 \times .30 = \$9,000 \times .25 = \$2,250$

$\$7,500 + \$2,250 = \$9,750$

Total turnover cost= \$9,750 per employee

Literature on organizational management describes many different reasons why employees leave or decide to stay with their employer. According to Chambers (2001), the most significant reasons peak performers leave organizations are for such reasons as; feeling unappreciated; boredom; misalignment of authority and responsibility; poor communication and management; lack of involvement in the decision making process; submarket compensation; unclear goals, objectives, and expectations; and lack of positive recognition.

Also in Chambers (2001, p. 310) Tom Trotter of Hownet Castings commented,

I think it's important to underscore the importance of individual frontline managers taking ownership for their recruiting and retention.

Unfortunately, it's something that we have taken for granted for a long time. We can't continue to do that. It has to be one of our core management competencies, just like leading the business has got to be. It can't be something that we delegate. It's too important, and many times delegating this responsibility just doesn't work. In the long run, we're not going to have the right kind of people in our business if we don't take personal responsibility but we leave the tasks to others.

Peter Drucker, the man considered by many to be the most influential and widely read authority on management, suggests that people would look upon their jobs as

places to hone skills, especially technical skills. Increasingly, then, workers would view their employment as little more than “facilities” or temporary work sites. Loyalty and allegiance, he surmised, would be to one’s craft, as opposed to a particular company. Hence, length of service at any job would be shorter than in the past (Arthur, 2001).

This could certainly be true in Extension as there are county Extension agents who feel the experience gained while being a county Extension agent would make them more valuable to other agencies or companies related to their subject area. The major duties and responsibilities as listed in the job description for a county Extension are: educational program planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, interpretation, office management and budgeting, professional improvement, and relationship building. These are the kind of skills which could be honed and marketed by county Extension agents to seek other jobs or careers.

Many companies conduct exit interviews with employees who choose to leave, but many fail to follow through with the findings of these interviews and do something about the problems which are identified. Branham (2001) commented that, in-depth questioning can reveal those “push factors”, or trouble spots in the organization, such as abusive or ineffective managers, insufficient challenge, and lack of opportunity for advancement, problem coworkers, and out-dated human resource policies. To avoid “top of mind” responses that fail to get at the root cause, whoever conducts the exit interview must know how to ask probing questions. Comments from exit interviews should be kept confidential to encourage openness and honesty. Push factors (root causes) honestly and precisely identified, combined with management’s desire to deal with them, can help managers avoid hiring people who may later leave for the same reasons.

The greatest concern with regard to turnover is associated with the unfavorable conditions which are placed upon an organization. Turnover impacts an organization in many ways, such as; increasing costs related to recruiting, selecting, and training new employees; reducing the morale of employees who remain with the organization, reducing relationships among employees, projecting an unfavorable image to those who remain informed about the organization, interrupting daily activities, and by diminishing the opportunity for organization to grow (Padilla-Vellez, 1993).

### **Extension Turnover**

To understand better why people leave Extension a study by Manton & van Es (1985) asked those who left Extension (called leavers) to give the most significant reasons for leaving as compared to those who have stayed. During the analysis of the data, it became clear that agents whose main responsibility was agriculture were giving reasons for leaving different from those in home economics and youth. The data in Table 3 indicate that most of the factors expressing dissatisfaction with the job are less likely to be listed as reasons for leaving than the factors that reflect conditions and opportunities outside Extension (pull factors). Home economics or youth agents indicated that most of the reasons for resigning related to the family. Changes in the family situation and moves of the family were most often listed as reasons for leaving, followed closely by too much time away from family. While the home economics and youth agents rarely listed alternative career opportunities as reasons for terminating Extension employment, the agricultural agents did list alternative career opportunities as reasons for leaving Extension. There are probably many reasons for these differences. People whose values

are more home and children orientated may be more likely to select careers in home economics and youth work. In addition, the choices also reflect the realities of the marketplace where alternative career opportunities in agriculture may be more lucrative and diverse than the opportunities available in home economics and youth work, especially in rural areas.

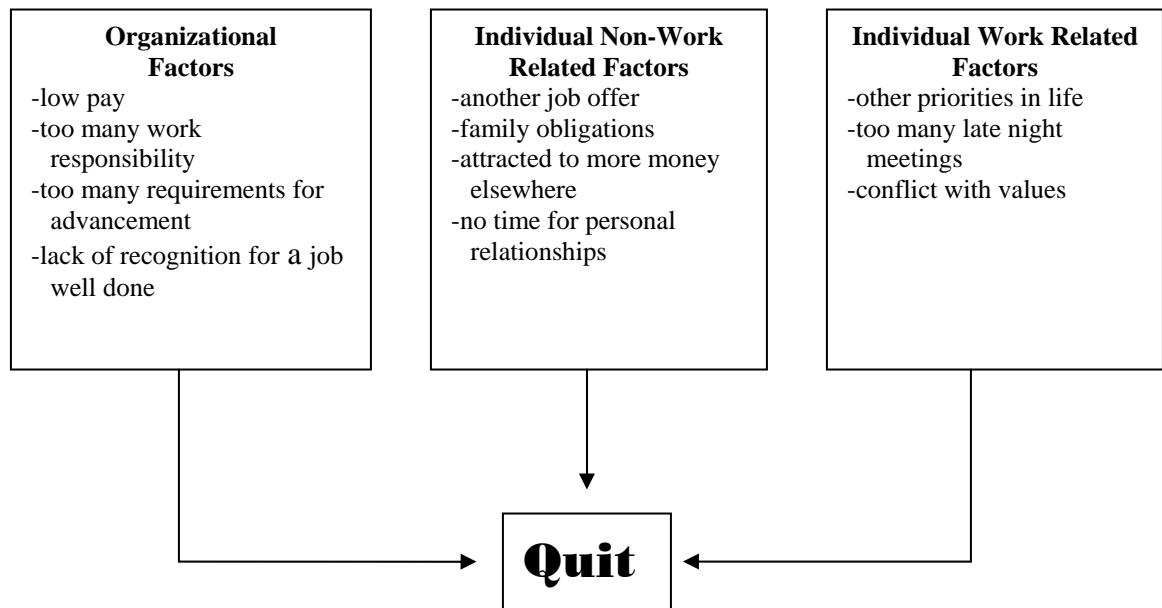
Table 3  
*Dissatisfaction with Job-Related Conditions*

Dissatisfaction with	Stayers		Leavers	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Salary	40	48	23	48
Compensation time	56	69	28	58
Routine tasks	40	48	20	42

In a study done with Ohio State University Extension, Kutilek (2000) said Extension has begun to build an ever-increasing database of information that can be applied to strengthening support to the current staff. Turnover rates have remained around 7% for the total Extension staff, 5% for agents, from 1995-1998. Compared to industry standards, this is a very low rate of turnover and an encouraging indicator of staff stability. However, taking the next step in comparing this state's turnover to the turnover of other Extension systems around the country will be important. Also, making a comparison to other educational institutions may provide insight into the relative significance of a 6-7% turnover rate.



Rousan and Henderson (1996) found several reasons why Ohio State University Extension agents are leaving the agency. As illustrated in a model shown in Figure 1, Extension agents are voluntarily leaving the organization due to a variety of organizational, individual work, and individual non-work related factors.



*Figure 1.* A Model of Voluntary Turnover of OSU Extension Agents

Texas Cooperative Extension has data about why employees leave employment with the educational agency through a voluntary questionnaire sent to former employees after their termination. The questionnaire focused on three major areas: 1) personal factors affecting your decision to leave, 2) organizational factors affecting your decision to leave, and 3) additional information in narrative form, such as; a) was necessary training provided?; b) did you experience discrimination?; c) what makes your new job

more attractive?; d) how much increase in salary did you receive with your new job?; and e) would you recommend Extension as a good place to work?

The county Extension agent's turnover rate for the last five years ranged from a low of 8.17% in 1998 to a high of 13.83% in 2000, with an average of 11%. The rate will be higher for 2003 due to the agency offering an early retirement program. The major reasons for leaving in ranked order were; better job, personal reasons, retirement, return to school, poor performance, and health. The statewide turnover rate for state employees for the fiscal year 2000 was 18.93 percent for full-time classified state employees (Texas State Auditor's Office, 2000). Although the agency's turnover rate is lower than for state employees, it still costs the agency valuable time and money to hire new people to replace those who choose to leave.

The interest in employee turnover, evident in past years, will probably expand in the future. Continued inflation and growth in human resource costs will require increasingly sophisticated human resource measurement systems, including turnover costs and consequences. There are important questions to answer regarding turnover; the individual and organizational importance of the turnover process will become even more salient in the coming decades. Understanding the concepts and consequences of turnover is more important than ever (Mobley, 1982).

## **Business Retention**

The employee turnover issue is the foundation of the challenge faced by employers who want to keep good and productive employees. High employee retention is what most businesses, organizations, agencies strive to improve. A high retention rate typically suggests these are the employers to work for; they are considered employee friendly.

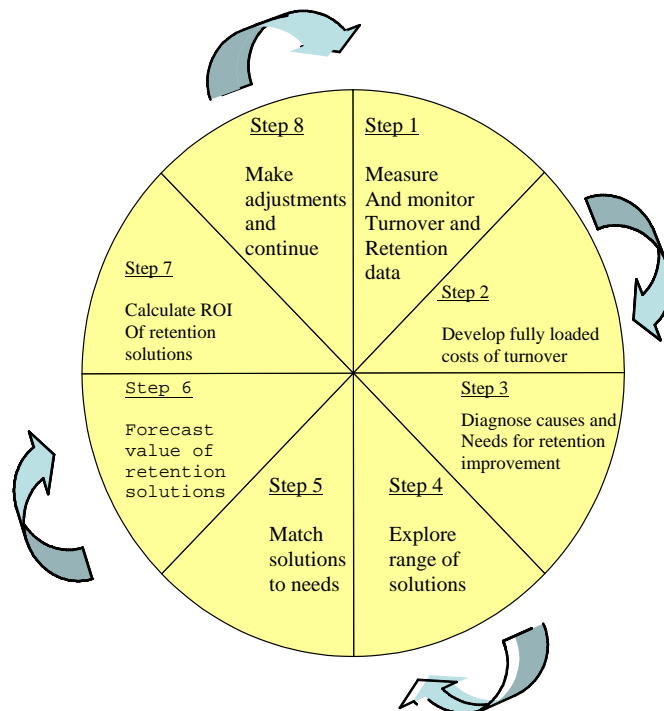
Hendrix (1980) reported that, no matter what the business is, one of the common factors in successful, highly productive businesses is a high level of employee retention. There are certain processes in human behavior which need to be understood for increased employee retention. These processes are: problem solving, motivation, and communication. The problem solving process is a sequence of steps which can be utilized in solving most problems. A logical process guide would include steps, such as, looking at the facts; identify the problem; develop goals and a plan; implement the plan; and evaluate the results.

Motivation is an inward force which causes certain behavior. Motivation can be influenced by one or several factors. Motivation in job performance may well be influenced by situations which are completely unrelated to the job. Management can be most effective by creating an environment which enhances feelings of self worth, involvement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and growth.

Communication is the keystone to the success of an organization. Communication skills are a package of many different skills. Improving communication skills involves sharpening all these skills, such as listening skills, speaking skills, and reading unspoken messages. Open communication eases tension, reduces confusion, lessens frustration and alleviates boredom-all high factors in job dissatisfaction and high employee turnover.

Basically, communications within an organization should be personal. It's people working with people to accomplish the goal of the organization.

The strategic accountability approach, outlined in Figure 2 is a basic retention model. The process brings accountability to the retention issue in eight steps. The strategic accountability approach has five very important advantages, as follows: It considers the retention issue to be an important part of strategy; the retention issues are measured with bottom-line results; the approach moves logically from one issue to another; the approach is a discipline and a methodology; and it is a continuous cycle for improvement (Phillips and Connell, 2003).



*Figure 2. Strategic Accountability Model*

A survey conducted by Robert Half International Inc. (Smith, 2001) showed one-third of the executives now agree that the work environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's business world- an astonishing increase from only 9 percent in 1993.

In Smith's own survey, even though 55 % of the respondents answered "salary" when asked, what are the reasons you stay at your present job? Other responses included; challenging job assignments, interesting work, benefits, flexibility in work hours, and good boss. Thirty nine percent said they wanted to feel they had a purpose on the job. Varied work assignments and career opportunities were also important.

Obviously, there are many thoughts and opinions on how to retain good employees and specific strategies to keep them within organizations. There are many ways to create a high-retention culture. Smith (2001) identified eight basic elements that are essential to the high retention organization. The eight elements for the high-retention organization are: clear sense of direction and purpose; caring management; flexible benefits and schedules adapted to the needs of the individual; open communication; a charged work environment; performance management; reward and recognition; and training and development.

Chart Your Course International (2004) surveyed employees from national and international small businesses, corporations, and government organizations. Table 4 shows the percent in agreement with the following question: What are the reasons you stay at your present job?

Table 4  
*What Are the Reasons You Stay at Your Present Job?*

Reasons	Percent in agreement
Challenging job assignments	59%
Salary	55%
Interesting work	53%
Benefits	48%
Flexibility in work hours	45%
Good boss	41%
Feel like we have a purpose	39%
Work assignments vary	38%
Pride	37%
Location is convenient	36%
Feel appreciated for what I do	35%
Career opportunities	34%
Makes me feel good	27%
Relationships	26%
Autonomy	25%
Have friends at work	20%
Like to travel	12%
No time to look for new job	10%
Bring pets to work	9%
Other	8%

Source: Survey designed and developed by Chart Your Course International, 770-860-9464.  
[www.ChartCourse.com](http://www.ChartCourse.com)

Chamber (2001) suggests, in today's labor market and changing times, employees should be prepared, or at least willing to accept change and to do things differently as in the past. Employees must constantly be prepared to address the emerging challenges of today's and tomorrow's workplace. Employers must provide the ongoing support of continuous personal and organizational growth and improvement. Because the demands of the workplace are constantly changing and the external economic challenges to the organization are always being redefined, employees must be prepared to meet such escalating demands and challenges. Survival and success today demand the acknowledgment that the procedures and behaviors that brought you to where you are

today will not take you where you want to go tomorrow. Everyone must be prepared to do things differently. Several factors contribute to the culture of preparation, such as, training. Employers should concentrate on providing the necessary training so employees can perform their jobs and prepare them for new responsibilities as needed.

Harris and Brannick (1999) found that world-class organizations integrate eight best-practice strategies into their companies. Practice one: Engage the soul. Great employees naturally search out, join, and stay with organizations that give them compelling reasons to commit their hearts and souls to something beyond quarterly stock reports or annual plans. Practice two: Reward accomplishments. Aligned companies concentrate on how and what reward systems best drive their culture to new levels and then weave these rewards systems into the very fabric of the culture. Practice three: More than money. For the vast majority of employees money is not the primary motivator. Something deeper inspires employee excellence, something that connects to the employee in a personal way. Practice four: Learning drives earning. Employees understand all too well that their very livelihood depends upon the ability to learn. They recognize that they must exponentially grow their own intellectual capital to survive. Practice five: Get a life. Aligned companies help integrate the personal life of the worker with his or her organizational life. They see strategic retention as more than just making an employee's work life more bearable, and more than just streamlining an employee's work schedule. Practice six: In the loop. Aligned companies understand that in-the-loop employees feel strong connections to the company. Connected employees jump into major projects, freely contribute their ideas and energy, and recommit themselves to the company goals. Practice seven: Lighten up. Aligned companies understand that great

employees are sure to remain with a company that is not afraid to lighten up. They passionately pursue creating an environment that reinforces to employees that it's ok to be yourself, to share the humor of your daily struggles, to be a little silly, to find the lighter side of business, and to share your heart! Practice eight: Free at last. Perhaps the greatest irony in world-class retention practices is that the greater the employee freedom, the greater the retention. Traditional management thinking abhors the idea of allowing employees freedom to control their work. Powerful connections occur when companies give employees the protection they need to excel—the power to control their own destinies-and then get out of their way.

Today's workers want, need, and sometimes demand certain things from employers. There seems to be more interest in a) balancing work and family issues, rather than b) being devoted and loyal to the employer at the expense of lost family time. Arthur (2001, p. 32) shared the following from a speech from then Vice President Al Gore about what workers need,

First, workers need lifelong economic security for themselves and their families. They need the opportunity to obtain skills that will guarantee them high wages. Workers should be able to use technology to their advantage, without fearing that it will make them "jobsolete". Workers should be skilled, not stuck, in the new economy. Second, workers need to balance work with caring for their families. Some workers can be helped by on-site childcare. A variable schedule enables others to care for children and aging parents. For still others, nontraditional working arrangements are the answer. But all workers need to know that they can



achieve a balance between work and family without having to forego adequate earnings and health and safe and fair-protection from health hazards and free from discrimination and other unfair employment practices. In the last thirty-five years a great many of the barriers have fallen which prevented America's women, minority, and disabled workers from participating, let alone succeeding, in the workplace. The future workforce is destined to be even more diverse. Future employees will have the advantages of multicultural, multilingual workforces that offer new opportunities to compete more effectively in the global market.

According to Arthur (2001) these comments from Al Gore expressed what workers need, but workers wants can be different than their needs. Numerous surveys reveal that what many employees really want these days is an enjoyable atmosphere and a feeling that they're making an impact in their jobs. A study conducted by Gerald Grahman, surveyed 1,500 employees concerning what they considered to be the top five workplace incentives. The responses were: personal thanks from manager; written thanks from manager; promotion for performance; public praise; and morale building meetings.

Schwartz (2001) says that in the employer world of today some businesses and companies consider incentives to help in retaining employees. These incentives could be extra fringe benefits or the offer of unique items to entice employees to stay, but today's research shows that employees want more meaningful things rather than material or monetary possessions.

Many companies and small businesses assume employee satisfaction and the steps needed to insure this should cost extra money and time. Sometimes the most effective

retention practices cost the least. Fitness centers and day care services are nice features, but nowhere in the research are these shown to make a true difference in retaining employees or contributing to intrinsic job satisfaction. Many of the past decade's retention practices totally defied years of research on what employees truly want and value at work. Studies as far back as the 1940's as well as many research efforts in the past few years show similar results: employees want appreciation, to be valued and respected, career growth, to contribute ideas on how work is done, to be a valuable part of the organization and to do meaningful work.

Another often mistaken assumption by companies and their management groups is when the economy is good they shouldn't have to worry about job retention. A slow or wavering economy brings more, not fewer, retention headaches. The kind of slowdown will be far different than those of the past. Talent shortages will remain, yet organizations must continually reshape their workforces in response to changing marketplace demands. Smart companies build cultures people just can't bear to leave. How they do is not based in fancy benefits and perks. The root causes of our recent worker shortages still loom. With the instability of the economy, finding and keeping good workers actually will be a far trickier task than in the boom years.

Job sculpting may be another important factor in retention. The Harvard Business Review defines job sculpting as the art of matching people to jobs that allows their deeply embedded life interests to be expressed (Butler & Waldroop, 2001). Job sculpting, then, begins when managers identify each employee's deeply embedded life interests. Deeply embedded life interests are not hobbies or enthusiasms; they are innate passions that are intricately entwined with personality. Life interests don't determine what we're

good at but what kinds of work we love. The following is a summary of the eight core functions which represent the way deeply embedded life interests find expression in business.

Application of technology—whether or not they are actually working as—or were trained to be engineers, people with the life interest application of technology are intrigued by the inner workings of things. They are curious about finding better ways to use technology to solve business problems.

Quantitative analysis—some people aren't just good at running the numbers, they excel at it. They see it as the best, and sometimes the only, way to figure out business solutions. Similarly, they consider mathematical work as fun when others consider it drudgery, such as performing a cash-flow analysis, forecasting the future performance of an investment instrument, or figuring out the best debt/equity structure for a business.

Theory development and conceptual thinking—for some people, nothing brings more enjoyment than thinking and talking about abstract ideas. People with this interest can be excited by building business models that explain competition with a given industry or by analyzing the competition position of a business within a particular market.

Creative production—some people always enjoy the beginning of projects the most, when there are many unknowns and they can make something out of nothing. These individuals are frequently seen as imaginative, out-of-box thinkers.

Counseling and mentoring—for some people, nothing is more enjoyable than teaching—in business, that usually translates into coaching or mentoring. These individuals are driven by the deeply embedded life interest of counseling and mentoring, allowing them to guide employees, peer, and even clients to better performance.

Managing people and relationships—longing to counsel and mentor people is one thing; wanting to manage them is another thing entirely. Individuals with this deeply embedded life interest enjoy dealing with people on a day-to-day basis. They derive a lot of satisfaction from workplace relationships, but they focus more on outcomes than do people in the counseling-and-mentoring category.

Enterprise Control—whether or not they like managing people, these people find satisfaction in making the decisions that determine the direction taken by a work team, a business unit, a company division, or an entire organization. These individuals also tend to ask for as much responsibility as possible in any work situation.

Influence through language and ideas—some people love ideas for their own sake, but others love expressing them for the sheer enjoyment that comes from storytelling, negotiating, or persuading. Such are people with the deeply embedded life interest of influence through language and ideas. They feel most fulfilled when they are writing or speaking, or both. Just let them communicate.

The businesses and companies interested in retaining good employees are constantly looking for opportunities to entice employees to stay with their organization. Branham (2001) suggests these twenty-four retention practices,

Be a company people want to work for.

- 1) Adopt a “give-and-get back” philosophy.
- 2) Measure what counts and pay for it.
- 3) Inspire commitment to a clear vision and definite objectives.

Select the right people in the first place.

- 4) Understand why some leave and why others stay.

- 5) Redesign the job itself to make it more rewarding.
- 6) Define the results you expect and the talent you need.
- 7) Ask the questions that require proof of talent.
- 8) Use multiple interviewers and reference checking.
- 9) Give a realistic job preview.
- 10) Reward employee referrals of successful new hires.
- 11) Hire and promote managers who have the talent to manage people.
- 12) Hire from within when possible.
- 13) Creatively expand your talent pool.

Get them off to a great start.

- 14) Give new hires the “red-carpet treatment”.
- 15) Communicate how their work is vital to the organization’s success.
- 16) Get commitment to a performance agreement.
- 17) Challenge early and often.
- 18) Train for autonomy and initiative.

Coach and reward for commitment.

- 19) Proactively manage the performance agreement.
- 20) Recognize results.
- 21) Train managers in career coaching and expect them to do it.
- 22) Give employees the tools to take charge of their careers.
- 23) Know when to keep and when to let go.
- 24) Have more fun!

Business management literature identifies demographic characteristics as possible reasons why employees make decisions to stay or leave employment. Up to this point, there have not been any discussions about different expectations from employees based on their age, gender, race, and religion. There are, however, different thought patterns and sense of loyalty and dedication with younger generations. The generation described here is the generation X'ers (under thirty five years old) (Muson, 2003).

Arthur (2001) suggests that the group that generates the greatest challenge when it comes to retention is younger workers. Scarce in numbers to begin with, this thirty-five-and-under group expects to balance fulfilling careers with familial responsibilities, as well as actively pursue personal interests. What really sets this group of workers apart is the huge edge they enjoy when it comes to information technology. They've grown up with it, are comfortable with it, and expect it to prevail in the workplace. Many of them work at part-time jobs while in high school and college. Therefore, they are not averse to working. They have grown up understanding the need for global interconnecting and are comfortable doing it via the Internet. Their views concerning a "normal" household extend to encompassing numerous family configurations. Having seen their parents fall victim to downsizing, mergers, takeovers, and closings, their sense of loyalty is to themselves. They are accustomed to functioning in a state of change and can make adjustments readily. As advocates of lifelong learning, they take courses on topics of interests or even obtain formal degree or certification from the Internet. They expect to go through numerous job changes and perhaps six to seven different careers in their lifetime. Accordingly, they view themselves as contract workers, lending their expertise to any of one employer for a limited period of time.

The older or experienced workers are the Baby Boomers (Muson, 2003) (38 to 57 years old) and like the generation Xer's they require different strategies to retain them as productive employees.

Howard Muson (2003) of the Conference Board suggests a 12 steps companies can take to retain the experienced workers.

- 1) Do long-range planning for your workforce needs. Collect demographic data and project retirement trends over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 2) Create an inventory of core skills that will be needed to fulfill your long-range strategic human resource plan, and chart the availability of these skills throughout the company.
- 3) Let older employees know you want them to take advantage of your company's opportunities for training and advancement.
- 4) Pay particular attention to stereotypes about the effects of age in the training of supervisors. Study literature on how aging affects, or does not affect, physical and cognitive abilities.
- 5) Encourage discussion of generational issues in your diversity training.
- 6) Rotate older employees who wish to diversify their work and develop new skills into different jobs.
- 7) Enlist experienced workers in programs to mentor younger people as part of their regular jobs.
- 8) Consider a phased-retirement program that enables valued senior employees to gradually reduce their work hours or weeks, and permits them to work part-time while collecting pension benefits.
- 9) Look into revising pension plans to gain additional benefits for retirees who return to work part-time.
- 10) When downsizing is necessary, try to find alternative strategies to early-retirement packages. Such offers can be counter-productive if too many of your best older employees take you up on them.
- 11) Assist employees in making informed retirement decisions through onsite seminars, phone help lines, online material, or a newsletter.
- 12) Redesign jobs where necessary to keep older

people with valuable skills. Study job descriptions to determine whether stressful, high-speed work or heavy physical tasks can be reduced. If that isn't possible, consider shifting veteran employees to less stressful positions where they can still make a contribution.

### **Extension Retention**

Employees are not solely motivated by money and employee behavior is linked to their attitudes (Dickson, 1973). Money is important to provide the employee with the financial resources needed to maintain their basic needs. However, the attitude and motivating factors can be directly related to job satisfaction. In a study by Lepley (2003), work satisfaction of Texas county Extension agents was significantly and positively correlated with life satisfaction and work effect of job on family life. Life satisfaction was also positively correlated with work satisfaction, along with effect of job on family life. Effect of job on family life was positively correlated with work satisfaction and life satisfaction. Therefore, as the overall satisfaction of an Extension agent increases so does their satisfaction with their work, life, and family. In a report from Fehlis & Willis (2001a), they commented that keeping employees satisfied is clearly in the best interests of the organization, not only in retaining the investment, knowledge, and experience embodied in current employees, but the organization will be more successful in reaching the organizational goals and in providing quality services to Texans.

Although the job responsibilities of county Extension agents are different from other jobs and careers, problems associated with retention are similar. Foster (1999), who represents a law firm suggests the following to increase job satisfaction and



retention: establish a solid orientation program; have reasonable and competitive expectations for billable hours (in Extension this could mean reasonable work hours); provide appropriate facilities and support; create a structure for advancement; assign substantive work; cross-train when possible; have mental health meetings; and provide or support continuing education.

Understanding employee motivation was considered in a study of Extension employees in Ohio by Lindner (1998). The ranked order of motivating factors were: interesting work; good wages; full appreciation of work done; job security; good working conditions; promotions and growth in the organization; feeling of being in on things; personal loyalty to employees; tactful discipline; and sympathetic help with personal problems. The key to motivating employees is to know what motivates them and designing a motivation program based on those needs.

The effectiveness of Extension is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Chesney, 1992; Buford, 1990; and Smith, 1990). Knowing what motivates employees and incorporating this knowledge into the reward system will help Extension identify, recruit, employ, train, and retain a productive work force. Motivating Extension employees requires both managers and employees working together (Buford, 1993). Extension employees must be willing to let managers know what motivates them, and managers must be willing to design reward systems that motivates employees. If properly designed, reward systems are not implemented; however, employees will not be motivated (Bowen & Radhakrishna, 1991).

There are several opportunities for county Extension agents in Texas to promote during their career. Among the promotion opportunities for agents are; transfer to

counties with more responsibilities, promote to a supervisory position, obtain an advanced degree, and promote on the county Extension agent career ladder (Fehlis & Willis, 2001b).

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

#### **Overview of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed with Texas Cooperative Extension. The study used a correlational design for two major purposes: 1) to explore relationships between variable, and 2) to predict scores on one variable from subject's scores on other variables (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

#### **Population**

The data for the target population were collected from 419 Texas county Extension agents who had been employed for at least three years as of January 1, 2004. A purposeful sampling was done to represent the population of all county Extension agents (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). A determination was made that within three years of employment many county Extension agents will have made a decision to stay or leave employment as an agent. This is not to suggest that agents will not leave employment after this period of time, but by that time many agents will have decided whether or not they are satisfied with this career choice. The listing of agents for the official study was collected from Texas Cooperative Extension. The agents included in the study had the following job designations: agriculture, natural resources; family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth development, horticulture, integrated pest management, marine,

community development, urban development, health education, expanded nutrition, and urban youth development.

### **Instrument**

A web based questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was adapted by the researcher from a previous used instrument conducted on county Extension agent turnover by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Mowbray, 2003). The questions were modified to reflect why agents stay with Extension as opposed to why agents leave Extension. The researcher used a Likert-type scale to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavior changes. A Likert-type scale involves a series of statements that respondents may choose from in order to rate their responses to evaluate questions (Vogt, 1999). Thirty-eight questions using Likert-type scales (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree) were administered. The mean ranges of scores were interpreted as the following: 1.0-1.5 strongly disagree; 1.51-2.50 disagree; 2.51-3.50 neutral; 3.51-4.50 agree; and 4.51-5.00 strongly agree. The instrument was divided into four sections: eleven organizational factors with one open ended question, ten individual work related factors with one open ended question, five individual non-work related factors with one open ended question, and twelve demographic with one open ended question. Some examples of the eleven organizational factors, included: opportunities for promotion/advancement, variety of work/scheduling, quality of support staff, and benefit/retirement packages. Among the ten individual work related factors were: manageable workload, opportunities for professional development, personal satisfaction,

and the opportunity to be creative through challenging work. The five individual non-work related factors included: opportunity for personal growth and development, opportunity for outside business/financial interests, my professional status in the community, opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders, and the opportunity to contribute to my community. The complete questionnaire is included in appendix A.

Content validity of the questionnaire was established by a panel of Extension administrators, including the following: district Extension administrators, regional program directors, county Extension directors, associate directors, executive associate director and director. The following points were examined by the panelists: item content and clarity, wording, length of the instrument, format, and overall appearance. The researcher received several emails from respondents throughout the data collection process in regard to the convenience of the questionnaire, importance and need for the study, and the respondents interest in the results of the study.

### **Pilot Test**

To ensure reliability, the instrument was pilot tested by using the population of county Extension agents who were not included in the official study. The pilot study population included 137 Texas county Extension agents who had been employed for less than three years as of January 1, 2004. Although, these data were not part of the study, the information was utilized for comparison purposes, and several mistakes were corrected before the official questionnaire was administered.

### **Data Collection**

The data were collected through county Extension agents completing a web-based questionnaire. To obtain the best response rate from the web-based questionnaire, the Hardin-Brashears Bi-Modal method (Fraze, Hardin, Brashears, Haygood, & Smith, 2003) was utilized. The first contact consisted of a pre-notice email to the county Extension agents informing them of the following: their selection for the study, some information about the study and importance of their participation. Four days later the second contact, email delivery of the questionnaire was initiated, using the web-based questionnaire as the mode of data collection. This email included the information about the research study, its purpose, importance, and confidentiality, how the data were to be utilized and incentive prizes for completing the questionnaire. Seven days following the delivery of the questionnaire notification, a third contact was made, a reminder-thank you was sent to thank those who had already responded to the questionnaire and to remind those who had not responded to do so at their earliest convenience. The thirteenth day, a fourth contact was made as another reminder-thank you and to remind those who had not responded that the incentive drawing was the next day and it was their last chance to respond to be eligible for the drawing. Nineteen days later, the fifth and final contact was made through an email notice to those county Extension agents who had either not responded to the questionnaire or chose not to include their email address for the incentive drawing. To ensure confidentiality, there were two data bases established to collect the data. One was for the county Extension agents who responded to the questionnaire and the other was established for those county Extension agents who responded to the questionnaire and chose to include their email address for the incentive

drawing. An incentive prize was offered as an award for those who responded to the questionnaire within the first two weeks of the initial notification. The incentive prize for the official population was a choice of one of three items: a two day, two person dove hunt; \$150 gift card; or a pesticide software bundle worth \$338. An electronic questionnaire was chosen because of its convenience for the county Extension agents.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using the (SAS, 1985) software package. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data including means, medians, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the nature of relationship between two variables when both variables are interval level (or ratio) measurements with each variable assuming more than three values. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients may range in size from -1.00 through +1.00. Coefficient of 0.00 indicates no relationship exists between two variables while a coefficient of -1.00 or +1.00 indicates perfect relationship. Davis (1971, p. 49) developed a convention for describing relationships as the following:

- .70 or higher- very strong association
- .50 to .69- substantial association
- .30 to .49- moderate association
- .10 to .29- low association
- .01 to .09- negligible association

Correlation matrix and reliability were calculated with Cronbach's alpha.

Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by

the true score of the “underlying construct”. Construct is the hypothetical variable that is being measured (Hatcher, 1994). All observed variables, except the demographic and open-ended items, were subjected to Shapiro-Wilk test (Royston, 1983) for normality and were found to have a normal distribution.

Independent samples t-tests were utilized to predict the dependent variables (organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors) with the independent variables (demographic factors) with only two choices (ex: male and female) for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. Analysis of variance F-tests were utilized to predict the dependent variables with demographic factors with two or more choices (ex: ethnicity) for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed with Texas Cooperative Extension. A purposeful sampling was done to represent the population of all county Extension agents (Gall et al., 1996). The official population for the study included 419 Texas county Extension agents employed by Texas Cooperative Extension for at least three years as of January 1, 2004. The response rate percentage was 87% or 364 respondents. Non response was not controlled for since the response rate was 87%.

#### **Results for Objective One**

The purpose of objective one was to describe the demographic profiles of county Extension agents who chose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension. Table 5 refers to the gender, marital status, if the agents have children, and the ethnic profile of the county Extension agents. Of the 364 respondents, 56% (203) were male and the remaining 44% (161) were female. Marital status indicated that 14% (52) were single, 73% (267) married, 12% (43) divorced, and 1% (2) widowed. Seventy-three percent (265) of the agents had children and 27% (99) had no children. The ethnic makeup of the county Extension agents was the following: 90% (327) White, 4% (13) African American, 4% (15) Hispanic, and the remaining 7 (2%) were Asian Pacific Islander, Native American, and other.

Table 5  
*Gender, Marital Status, Children, and Ethnicity Profiles That Characterize the County Extension Agents Who Choose to Stay in Extension*

<b>Gender</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Male	203	55.8
Female	161	44.2
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	52	14.3
Married	267	73.3
Divorced	43	11.8
Widowed	2	0.6
<b>Do you have children?</b>		
Yes	265	72.8
No	99	27.2
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	327	90.3
African American	13	3.6
Hispanic	15	4.14
Asian/Pacific	1	0.3
Islander		
Native American	2	.6
Other	4	1.1

Table 6 shows the listing of county Extension agents' job title or designation, years employed by Texas Cooperative Extension and the category county where the agent serves. The county Extension agent's title of job designations consisted of the following: 43% (157) CEA-Ag, 33% (121) CEA-FCS, 11% (41) CEA- 4-H, 4% (14) CEA-HORT, 3% (11) EA-IPM, and the remaining 5% (18) were CEA-Marine, CEA-NR, CEA-COM, CEA-Urban Development, CEA-UYD, and EA-ENP.

There was a distribution years of employment of county Extension agents by Texas Cooperative Extension: 19% (69) for 3-5 years; 23% (83) for 6-10 years; 15% (56) for 11-15 years; 7% (26) for 16-20 years; and over 20 years were 36% (130).

County category information was also collected. All counties served by Texas Cooperative Extension are assigned a category number which ranges from a one to seven. The grouping of the counties was done in an effort to categorize, in local groupings, counties possessing similar potential for Extension programs and to reflect the complexity, difficulty, and workload of county Extension agents responsible for the Extension program. These factors are as follows: total county population (35%); total county income (35%); total agricultural income (10%); and number of farms (20%) (McConnell, 2002). Category one are the smaller populated counties and category seven are the largest populated counties.

Five percent (17) of the county Extension agents who responded serve in a category one county; 9% (30) serve in a category two county; 13% (47) serve in a category three county; 29% (101) serve in a category four county; 23% (80) serve in a category five county; 12% (44) serve in a category six county; and 10% (34) of the county Extension agents serve in a category seven county.

Table 6

*Title, years of service, and category county profiles of County Extension Agents who choose to stay in Extension*

<b>Present Title</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
CEA-Ag	157	43.4
CEA-FCS	121	33.4
CEA-4-H	41	11.3
CEA-Marine	2	.6
CEA-NR	3	.8
CEA-COM	1	.3
EA-IPM	11	3.0
CEA-Urban	5	1.4
Development		
CEA-UYD	4	1.1
EA-ENP	3	.8
CEA-HORT	14	3.9
<b>Years Employed by Texas Cooperative Extension</b>		
3-5	69	19.0
6-10	83	22.8
11-15	56	15.4
16-20	26	7.4
Over 20	130	34.7
<b>Category of county where you serve</b>		
Category 1	17	4.8
Category 2	30	8.5
Category 3	47	13.3
Category 4	101	28.6
Category 5	80	22.7
Category 6	44	12.5
Category 7	34	9.6

Table 7 describes the career profile of those county Extension agents who chose Extension as their first career choice, if they have served in more than one county, if they had seriously thought about leaving Extension, and if they had left Extension and later rehired.

Extension was the first career choice for 59% (213) of the county Extension agents who responded and Extension was not the first career choice for 41% (147) of the county Extension agents.

Eight- two percent (298) of the respondents have served in more than one county during their career and 18% (65) have only served in one county. Of the agents who served in more than one county, 44% (129) have served in 1-2 counties, 52% (155) have served in 3-5 counties, and 4% (12) have served in over five counties.

Another question of interest was: Have you seriously (have applied for other jobs) thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity? To determine the seriousness of thoughts of leaving, it was determined that if an agent applied for another job, it could be considered they were serious about other employment. Fifty-eight percent (208) have seriously considered leaving Texas Cooperative Extension for other job opportunities and 42% (153) have not seriously considered leaving Extension.

Lastly, 13% (48) of the county Extension agents left Extension and later were rehired and 87% (310) of the responding county Extension agents have not left Extension for other job opportunities.

Table 7  
*Career Profile for County Extension Agents Who Choose to Stay in Extension.*

<b>Was Extension your first career choice?</b>		
	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	213	59.2
No	147	40.8
<b>Have you served in more than one county?</b>		
Yes	298	82.1
No	65	17.9
<b>If yes, how many?</b>		
1-2	129	43.6
3-5	155	52.4
Over 5	12	4.1
<b>Have you seriously (applied for other jobs) thought about of leaving Extension</b>		
Yes	208	57.6
No	153	42.9
<b>Have you left Extension then later rehired?</b>		
Yes	48	13.4
No	310	86.6

### Results for Objective Two

Tables 8-10 summarize the organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors of why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. To determine the percent of respondents who agreed with the statements of these areas of interest the responses associated with agree and strongly agree (Likert-type scale of 4 and 5 respectively) were added together. Means and standard deviations are also provided as a descriptive measure of these variables.

The Cronbach coefficient alpha raw score for organizational factors was .74. The mean for organizational factors was 3.5 (SD= 1.0). As shown in Table 8, 94% (342), the respondents said variety of work/scheduling was an organizational factor of why they chose to stay in Extension, with a mean of 4.4 (SD=.7). For benefits/retirement package, 88% (318) agreed or strongly agreed that it was an incentive to stay, with a mean of 4.2

(SD=.8). No direct supervisor managing my work regularly was also an incentive to stay in Extension for 76% (276) of the respondents, showing a mean of 4.0 (SD=.9). Job security was important to 59% (215) of the responding county Extension agents with a mean of 3.5 (SD=.9).

Fifty four percent (196) of the agents agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of support from Extension specialists was an incentive to stay in Extension, with a mean of 3.4 (SD=1.0). Those same agents 52% (193), said the quality of support staff was an incentive to stay, with a mean of 3.5 (SD=1.0). Understanding/fairness of supervisor was an incentive to stay for 52% (190) of the respondents, with a mean of 3.4 (SD=1.1). Forty nine percent (163) with a mean of 3.2 (SD=1.0) agreed that the office environment/facilities/equipment was an incentive to stay in Extension.

Only 37% (135), said salary was an incentive to stay, with a mean of 2.9 (SD=1.1). The recognition the agents receive from their supervisor was important to 36% (131) of the agents who responded for a mean of 3.0 (SD=1.1). Lastly, the opportunities for advancement were an important incentive to stay for only 26% (94) of the agents with a mean of 2.8 (SD=1.0).

Table 8

*Frequency Analysis to Determine Organization Factors of Why County Extension Agents Choose to Stay in Extension*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%*</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Organizational Factors</b>			<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Variety of work/scheduling (n=363)	342	94.2	4.4	0.69
Benefit/retirement package (n=362)	318	87.9	4.2	0.84
No direct supervisor managing my work regularly (n=362)	276	76.2	4.0	0.95
Job security (n=363)	215	59.2	3.5	0.94
Quality/support from Extension specialists(n=364)	196	53.8	3.4	1.02
Quality of support staff (n=363)	193	53.2	3.5	1.03
Understanding/fairness of supervisor (n=363)	190	52.3	3.4	1.10
Office environment/facilities/equipment (n=364)	163	44.8	3.2	1.01
Salary (n=364)	135	37.1	2.9	1.13
Recognition from supervisor (n=363)	131	36.1	3.0	1.07
Opportunities for promotion/advancement (n=364)	94	25.8	2.8	1.02

Note. Cronbach Coefficient alpha raw score for organizational factors was .74 \* Responses associated with agree and strongly agree were added together to get percent of respondents.

As shown in Table 9, the mean score for individual work related factors of why county Extension agents chose to stay was 3.75 (SD=.86). The Cronbach coefficient alpha raw score was .69 for individual work related factors.

Interesting work was an important incentive to stay in Extension for 97% (354) of the agents who responded, with a mean of 4.3 (SD=.6). The agents, 91% (330) agreed or strongly agreed that personal satisfaction was an incentive to stay. The mean for this variable was 4.3 with a standard deviation of .7. Eight-nine percent (322) said that the



opportunity to be creative through challenging work was a reason to stay in Extension. This variable had a mean of 4.1 (SD=.7). The responding agents, 84% (305), agreed that professional scheduling was an incentive, with a mean of 4.1 (SD= .7).

Opportunities for professional development was also an incentive to stay in Extension for 72% (260) of the responding agents and this response had a mean of 3.8 (SD=.8). Also, 72% (261) of the agents agreed that the recognition they receive from the clientele they serve is an incentive for them to stay in Extension with a mean of 3.8 (SD=.9).

The agents, 70% (256) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that professional relationships with co-workers and peers through professional associations was a reason they have stayed in Extension. This variable had a mean of 3.8 (SD=.9). Sixty percent (219), with a mean of 3.6 (SD=1.0), said the opportunity to travel on the job was an incentive for them to stay in Extension. Less than half or 42% (151) of the agents said the opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H was a reason to stay and it had a mean of 3.3 (SD=1.1). Lastly, only 19% (69) agreed that a manageable workload was an incentive to stay and with a mean of 2.4 (SD=1.0) most of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Table 9  
*Frequency Analysis to Determine Individual Work Related Factors of Why County  
 Extension Agents Choose to Stay in Extension*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%*</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Individual work related</b>			<b>3.75</b>	<b>.86</b>
Interesting work (n=364)	354	97.3	4.3	.56
Personal satisfaction (n=364)	330	90.7	4.3	.71
Opportunity to be creative through challenging work(n=364)	322	88.5	4.1	.66
Professional scheduling (n=364)	305	83.8	4.1	.92
Opportunities for professional development (n=362)	260	71.8	3.8	.79
Recognition from clientele I serve (n=364)	261	71.7	3.8	.92
Professional relationships with co-workers and peers through professional associations (n=364)	256	70.3	3.8	.91
Opportunity to travel on the job (n=358)	219	60.2	3.6	1.03
Opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H (n=358)	151	42.2	3.3	1.11
Manageable work load (n=363)	69	19.0	2.4	1.03

Note. Cronbach Coefficient alpha raw score for individual work related factors was .69. \* Responses associated with agree and strongly agree were added together to get percent of respondents.

As shown in Table 10, the overall individual non-work related factors mean of was 3.6 (SD=.9). The Cronbach coefficient alpha raw score was .69.

93% (303) of the respondents said the opportunity to contribute to my community was an individual non-work related factor for choosing to stay in Extension, with a high mean score of 4.3 (SD=.7). Seventy-three percent (266) of the agents agreed that the opportunity for personal growth and development was an incentive to stay in Extension and it had a mean of 3.8 (SD=.8). The responding agents, 70% (256) agreed or strongly agreed that the opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders was an incentive to stay, with a mean of 3.8 (SD=.9). Only, 61% (222) agreed that their professional status in the community was an incentive to stay and it had a mean score of

3.6 (SD=.9). Lastly, only 22% (79) agreed that the opportunity for outside business/financial interests was reason to stay with Extension, with a mean of 2.5 (SD=1.2), the majority of the respondent did not agree that this was as incentive to stay employed by Extension

Table 10

*Frequency Analysis to Determine Individual Non-Work Related Factor of Why County Extension Agents Choose to Stay in Extension*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%*</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Individual non-work related factors</b>			<b>3.6</b>	<b>.88</b>
Opportunity to contribute to my community (n=363)	303	93.1	4.3	.67
Opportunity for personal growth and development (n=364)	266	73.1	3.8	.84
Opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders (n=364)	256	70.3	3.8	.86
My professional status in community (n=364)	222	60.98	3.6	.89
Opportunity for outside business/financial interests (n=364)	79	21.9	2.5	1.15

Note. Cronbach Coefficient alpha raw score for individual non-work related factor was .69. \*Responses associated with agree and strongly agree were added together to get percent of respondents.

The questionnaire included three open ended questions for the respondents to add subjective comments to further explain other items within the three areas, including organizational, individual work related and individual non-work related factors. A fourth open ended question was included in the demographic section which asked the respondents to further explain the reasons why they have seriously thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity. Tables 12-15 refer to keyword frequency analysis for the comments from the respondents. The entire list of open ended question comments is included in Appendices C, D, E, and F.

As shown in Table 11, the keyword county frequency for the majority of the opened comments for organizational factors were as follows: 13% (24) time, 13% (23) benefits, 10% (18) retirement, 10% (18) youth, 8% (15) supervisor, 8% (14) 4-H, 8% (14) difference, 8% (14) flexibility, 5% (9) recognition, 4% (7) satisfaction. The remaining open ended comments for organizational factors included; advancement, children, insurance, public, challenge, family, paperwork, promotion, reports, stress, and workload.

Table 11  
*Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Organizational Factors*

<b>Keyword</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Time	24	13.11
Benefits	23	12.57
Retirement	18	9.84
Youth	18	9.84
Supervisor	15	8.20
4-H	14	7.65
Difference	14	7.65
Flexibility	14	7.65
Recognition	9	4.92
Satisfaction	7	3.83
Advancement	4	2.19
Children	4	2.19
Insurance	3	1.64
Public	3	1.64
Challenge	2	1.09
Family	2	1.09
Leave	2	1.09
Paperwork	2	1.09
Promotion	1	0.55
Reports	1	0.55
Stress	1	0.55
Workload	1	0.55

As shown in Table 12, the keyword count for the open ended comments for individual work related factors are as follows: 25% (16) children; 25% (16) workload; 17% (11) family; 9% (6) difference; 6% (4) flexibility; 6% (4) scheduling; 3% (2) leave; 3% (2) schedule; 3% (2) stress; and 3% (2) reporting.

Table 12  
*Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Individual Work Related Factors*

<b>Keyword</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Children	16	24.62
Workload	16	24.62
Family	11	16.92
Difference	6	9.23
Flexibility	4	6.15
Scheduling	4	6.15
Leave	2	3.08
Schedule	2	3.08
Stress	2	3.08
Reporting	2	3.08

As shown in Table 13, the keyword count for open ended comments for individual non-work related factors are as follows: 43% (24) community; 21% (12) business; 14% (8) personal; 9% (5) professional; 5% (3) family; 4% (2) workload; 2% (1) difference; and 2% (1) pressure.

Table 13

*Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Individual Non-Work Related Factors*

<b>Keyword</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Community	24	42.86
Business	12	21.43
Personal	8	14.29
Professional	5	8.93
Family	3	5.36
Workload	2	3.57
Difference	1	1.79
Pressure	1	1.79

As shown in Table 14, the keyword count for the open ended comments for the reasons agents consider leaving Extension are as follows: 24% (30) salary; 22% (28) family; 13% (16) administration; 7% (9) workload; 6% (8) leave; 6% (7) children; 6% (7) stress; 4% (5) advancement; 3% (4) co-worker; 2% (3) promotion; 2% (2) difference; 2% (2) paperwork; 2% (2) reports; 1% (1) administrator; and 1% (1) travel.

Table 14

*Keyword Count Frequency Analysis for Open Ended Comments for Reasons to Leave Extension*

<b>Keyword</b>	<i>f</i>	%
Salary	30	24.00
Family	28	22.40
Administration	16	12.80
Workload	9	7.20
Leave	8	6.40
Children	7	5.60
Stress	7	5.60
Advancement	5	4.00
Co-worker	4	3.20
Promotion	3	2.40
Difference	2	1.60
Paperwork	2	1.60
Reports	2	1.60
Administrator	1	0.80
Travel	1	0.80

### **Results for Objective Three**

Tables 15-17 show the data which determine the nature and strength of various relationships between factors of retention of county Extension agents and organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors. Data analysis was accomplished through Pearson correlation analysis. The items were found to be significant at the .05 level. The data in the following tables are reported for those relationships which were at least moderate correlations (.30-.49) and above.

As shown in Table 15, the nature and strength of relationship of organizational factors and retention of county Extension agents between recognition from supervisor and understanding/fairness of supervisor showed a very strong relationship of  $r=.72$ , ( $p<.00$ ). The following relationships only showed a moderate relationship: quality of

support and office environment/facilities/equipment of  $r = .46$  ( $p < .00$ ); professional scheduling and no direct supervisor managing my work regularly of  $r = .37$  ( $p < .00$ ); benefit/retirement package and job security of  $r = .37$  ( $p < .00$ ); benefit/retirement package and salary of  $r = .32$  ( $p < .00$ ); and opportunity for promotion/advancement of  $r = .35$  ( $p < .00$ ).

Table 15

*Nature and Strength of Relationships Between Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents*

	Understanding / fairness of supervisor	Office environment facilities/equipment	Do direct supervisor managing my work	Job security	Recognition from supervisor	Salary		
Variable	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Relationship
Recognition from supervisors (n=362)	.72						<.00	Very Strong
Quality of support (n=363)		.46					<.00	Moderate
Professional scheduling (n=362)			.37				<.00	Moderate
Benefit/retirement package (n=361)				.37		.32	<.00	Moderate
Opportunity for promotion/advancement (n=363)					.35		<.00	Moderate



As shown in Table 16, the nature and strength of relationships between individual work related factors and retention of county Extension agents between interesting work and professional scheduling showed a moderate relationship of  $r=.45$  ( $p<.00$ ). The other moderate relationships were as follows: interesting work and opportunity to be creative through challenging work of  $r=.39$  ( $p<.00$ ); personal satisfaction and opportunity to be creative through challenging work of  $r=.41$  ( $p<.00$ ); opportunity to travel on the job and opportunity for professional development of  $r=.41$  ( $p<.00$ ); professional relationships with co-worker and peers through professional association of  $r=.30$  ( $p<.00$ ); professional relationships with co-worker and peers through professional associations and opportunity to be creative through challenging work of  $r=.31$  ( $p<.00$ ); professional relationships with co-worker and peers through professional associations and opportunity for professional development of  $r=.35$  ( $p<.00$ ); lastly professional relationships with co-worker and peers through professional associations and opportunity to travel on the job of  $r=.33$  ( $p>.00$ ).

Table 16

*Nature and Strength of Relationships Between Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents*

	Personal satisfaction	Opportunity to be creative through challenging work	Opportunity for professional development	Opportunity to travel on the job		
Variable	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Relationship
Interesting work (n=364)	.45	.39			<.00	Moderate
Personal satisfaction (n=364)		.41			<.00	Moderate
Opportunity to travel on the job (n=362)			.40		<.00	Moderate
Professional relationship with co-worker and peers through professional association (n=364)	.30	.31	.35	.33	<.00	Moderate

As shown in Table 17, the nature and strength of relationships between individual non-work related factors and retention of county Extension agents showed only one substantial relationship with the others moderate and below. The substantial relationship of  $r = .65$  ( $p < .00$ ) was between my professional status in the community and opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders. The other moderate relationships were as follows: my professional status in the community and opportunity to contribute to my community of  $r = .42$  ( $p < .00$ ); opportunity to contribute to my community and opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders of  $r = .47$  ( $p < .00$ ); opportunity for personal growth and development and opportunity to know and interact

with key community leaders of  $r = .37$  ( $p < .00$ ); opportunity for personal growth and development and opportunity to contribute to my community of  $r = .46$  ( $p < .0$ ); and lastly opportunity for personal growth and development and my professional status in the community of  $r = .38$  ( $p > .00$ ).

Table 17

*Nature and Strength of Relationships Between Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents*

	Opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders	Opportunity to contribute to my community	My professional status in the community		
Variable	$r$	$r$	$r$	$p$	Relationship
My professional status in the community (n=364)	.65	.42		<.00	Substantial and moderate
Opportunity to contribute to my community (n=363)	.47			<.00	Moderate
Opportunity for personal growth and development (n=363)	.37	.46	.38	<.00	Moderate

### Results for Objective Four

Tables 18- 53 show variables which best determine the predictors of why county Extension agents' choose to stay in Extension. Independent samples t-tests and analysis

of variance F-tests was utilized to determine significant differences among the independent variables (demographic factors) and dependent variables (organizational and individual factors).

Independent t-tests were utilized to determine differences in the means when there were only two choices of responses. These data are displayed in Tables 18-36. In Table 18, there was a significant difference in gender attitudes for organizational factors,  $t(362)=3.07, p=.00$ , as female county Extension agents ( $M=3.57, SD=.50$ ) tended to agree that organizational factors were more of an incentive to stay in Extension than their male counterparts ( $M=3.40, SD=.52$ ), who tended to be more neutral.

Table 18

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender*

Gender	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	203	3.40	0.52	3.07	.00
Female	161	3.57	0.50		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>. A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was a significant difference in individual work related factors by gender. Table 19 shows that female agents,  $t(362)=2.92, p=.00$ , with ( $M=3.83, SD=.59$ ) tended to agree that individual work related factors was an incentive to stay as compared to the male county Extension agents ( $M=3.70, SD=.44$ ).

Table 19

*Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender*

Gender	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	203	3.70	0.44	2.92	.00
Female	161	3.83	0.59		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean individual work factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was no significant difference, as shown in Table 20, with individual non-work related factors and gender,  $t(362)=.76$ ,  $p=.44$ , as an incentive to stay employed by Extension.

Table 20

*Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender*

Gender	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	203	3.56	0.59	.76	.44
Female	161	3.61	0.61		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 21, there were no significant difference,  $t(362)=1.41$ ,  $p=.16$ , for those county Extension agents who have children and organizational factors as an incentive to stay in Extension.

Table 21

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Have Children*

Do you have children?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	205	3.50	.52	1.41	.16
No	.99	3.41	.51		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 22 shows there was no significant difference,  $t(362)=1.07$ ,  $p=.29$ , between those agents who have children for individual work factors and incentives to stay in Extension.

Table 22

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Have Children*

Do you have children?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	265	3.77	.45	1.07	.29
No	.99	3.71	.46		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

The last table for the children issue, Table 23, shows again that there was no significant difference,  $t(362)=.75$ ,  $p=.46$ , between those agents who have children and individual non-work related factors as incentives to stay with Extension.

Table 23

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Have Children*

Do you have children?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	265	3.60	.59	.75	.46
No	.99	3.55	.61		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 24, there was no significant difference,  $t(358)=.94$ ,  $p=.35$ , between whether an agent chose Extension as their first career choice and organizational factors as an incentive to stay in Extension.

Table 24

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice*

Was Extension your first career choice	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	213	3.50	.50	.94	.35
No	147	3.44	.54		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was no significant difference,  $t(358)=.46$ ,  $p=.64$ , between individual work related factors and if an agent chose Extension as their first career choice as a retention factor to stay in Extension, as shown in Table 25.

Table 25

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice*

Was Extension your first career choice	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	213	3.77	.45	.46	.64
No	147	3.75	.45		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 26, again there was no significant difference,  $t(358)=1.55$ ,  $p=.12$ , between individual non-work related factors and if the agent chose Extension as their first career choice as a factor to stay in Extension.

Table 26

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice*

Was Extension your first career choice	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	213	3.63	.57	1.55	.12
No	147	3.53	.61		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

In Table 27, the data shows no significant difference,  $t(361)=1.05$ ,  $p=.29$ , between those agents who have served in more than one county and organizational factors as an incentive to stay in Extension.



Table 27

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Served in More Than One County*

Have you served in more than one county?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	298	3.46	.54	1.05	.29
No	65	3.54	.43		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>. A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Those county Extension agents who have served in more than one county and individual work related factors and retention of agents showed no significant difference,  $t(361)=1.27, p=.20$ , as an incentive to stay in Extension, as shown in Table 28.

Table 28

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Served in More Than One County*

Have you served in more than one county?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	298	3.75	.45	1.27	.20
No	65	3.82	.47		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>. A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 29, as with the above mentioned data, there was no significant difference,  $t(361)=1.11, p=.26$ , between those agents who have served in more than one county and individual non-work related factors as an incentive to stay in Extension.

Table 29

*Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Served in More Than One County*

Have you served in more than one county?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	298	3.57	.62	1.11	.26
No	65	3.82	.49		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 30, there was a significant difference,  $t(359)=4.05$ ,  $p=.00$ , between those agents who have seriously thought about leaving Extension and organizational factors. Those agents who have not thought about leaving ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=.49$ ) tend to agree that organizational factors are an incentive to stay in Extension as compared to those agents who have seriously thought about leaving ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=.52$ ) who tend to be more neutral that organizational factors are reasons to stay.

Table 30

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Seriously Thought About Leaving Extension*

Have you seriously thought about leaving Extension	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	208	3.39	.52	4.05	.00
No	153	3.60	.49		

*Note:* *M<sup>a</sup>*. A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 31, the data shows a significant difference,  $t(359)=2.81$ ,  $p=.01$ , between individual work related factors and those agents who have seriously thought about leaving Extension. Those agents who have not thought about leaving Extension ( $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=.45$ ), tend to agree that individual work related factors are an incentive to

stay in Extension as compared to those agents who have seriously thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=.44$ ), who also agree.

Table 31

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Seriously Thought About Leaving Extension*

Have you seriously thought about leaving Extension	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	208	3.71	.44	2.81	.01
No	153	3.84	.45		

*Note:*  $M^a$ . A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There also was a significant difference,  $t(359)=2.00$ ,  $p=.05$ , between those agents who have thought about leaving and individual non-work related factors, as shown in Table 32. Those agents who have not thought about leaving Extension ( $M=3.67$ ,  $SD=.57$ ) tend to agree that the individual non-work related factors are incentives to stay with Extension as compared to those agents who have thought about leaving ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.59$ ), even though they agree as well.

Table 32

*Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Seriously Thought About Leaving Extension*

Have you seriously thought about leaving Extension ?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	208	3.54	.59	2.00	.05
No	153	3.67	.57		

*Note:*  $M^a$ . A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

The data in Table 33 shows there is a significant difference,  $t(356)=2.08$ ,  $p=.04$ , between organizational factors and those agents who have left Extension and later rehired. Those agents who have left Extension ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.49$ ) tend to agree that the organizational factors are incentives to stay in Extension as compared to those agents who have never left Extension ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=.52$ ), who tend to be more neutral on this issue.

Table 33

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Left Extension Then Later Rehired*

Have you left Extension and then rehired?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	48	3.62	.49	2.08	.04
No	310	3.44	.52		

*Note:*  $M^a$ . A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There is no significant difference,  $t(356)=1.25$ ,  $p=.21$ , between those agents who have left Extension and later rehired and individual work related factors as incentives to stay in Extension, as shown in Table 34.

Table 34

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Left Extension Then Later Rehired*

Have you left Extension and then rehired?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	48	3.84	.45	1.25	.21
No	310	3.75	.45		

*Note:*  $M^a$ . A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown in the last independent t-test Table 35, there is no significant difference,  $t(356)=.23, p=.82$ , between those agents who have left Extension and later rehired and individual non-work related factors as incentives to stay in Extension.

Table 35

*Individual Non-work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Those Agents Who Have Left Extension Then Later Rehired*

Have you left Extension and then rehired?	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	48	3.61	.67	.23	.82
No	310	3.59	.58		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>. A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

In Tables 36-53, the researcher utilized analysis of variance F-tests to determine the mean differences between the dependent variables with the independent variables or demographic factors which had more than two response choices. As shown in the first analysis of variance Table 36 there was no significant difference,  $F(2,358)= 1.17, p=.31$ , between the county Extension agent's marital status and organizational factors as incentives to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension

Table 36

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status (N=364)*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Single	52	3.39	0.51	1.17	.31
Married	267	3.49	0.51		
Divorced	42	3.41	0.54		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>. A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There is no significant difference,  $F(2, 358) = .60, p = .55$ , between the agent's marital status and individual work related factors as reasons to stay with Extension, as shown in Table 37.

Table 37

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status (N=364)*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Single	52	3.70	0.50	0.60	0.55
Married	267	3.77	0.43		
Divorced	42	3.73	0.50		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

The data shown in Table 38 shows there is again, no significant difference,  $F(2, 358) = 1.66, p = .19$ , between the responding agent's marital status and individual non-work related factors as reasons to stay employed by Extension.

Table 38

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status (N=364)*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Single	52	3.47	0.62	1.66	.19
Married	267	3.58	0.58		
Divorced	42	3.69	0.64		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

To discuss retention factors related to ethnicity, Table 39 shows there is no significant difference,  $F(2, 352)=2.41, p=.09$ ), between the agent's ethnicity and organizational factors for incentives to stay with Extension.

Table 39

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Ethnicity. (N=364)*

Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
White	327	3.49	0.51	2.41	.09
African American	13	3.53	0.39		
Hispanic	15	3.20	0.60		

Note: M<sup>a</sup>: A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As shown Table 40, there is no significant difference,  $F(2,352)=.62, p=.54$ ), between the agents' ethnicity and individual work related factors as an incentive to stay in Extension.

Table 40

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Ethnicity. (N=364)*

Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
White	327	3.76	0.45	0.62	.54
African American	13	3.90	0.24		
Hispanic	15	3.78	0.59		

Note: M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 41 shows a significant difference,  $F(2,352)=3.41, p=.03$ , between the agent's ethnicity and individual non-work related factors as an incentive to stay with Extension. Those agents who are African American ( $M=4.0, SD=.24$ ) tend to agree that

organizational factors are an incentive to stay in Extension as compared to the White and Hispanic county Extension agent's ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=.45$  and  $M=3.78$ ,  $SD=.59$ , respectively), who also agree with this statement.

Table 41

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Ethnicity. (N=364)*

Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
White	327	3.59	0.56	3.41	.03
African American	13	4.0	0.35		
Hispanic	15	3.57	0.68		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean Individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was a significant difference,  $F(5,350)=2.65$ ,  $p=.02$ , between the county Extension agent's job title and organizational factors as an incentive for agents to stay with Extension, as depicted in Table 42. The CEA-FCS (Family and Consumer Sciences), ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=.49$ ) tend to agree that organizational factors are an incentive to stay in Extension as compared to the CEA-Ag (Agriculture), ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=.54$ ) who tend to be more neutral on the issue of organizational factors as an incentive to stay with Extension.



Table 42

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Job Title (N=364)*

Job Title	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
CEA-Ag	162	3.38	0.54	2.65	.02
CEA-FCS	121	3.59	0.49		
CEA-4-H	45	3.44	0.48		
EA-IPM	11	3.58	0.50		
EA-ENP	3	3.33	0.47		
CEA-HORT	14	3.60	0.49		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was no significant difference,  $F(5,350)=1.94$ ,  $p=.09$ , between individual work related factors and the job title of county Extension agents as an incentive to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension, as shown in Table 43.

Table 43

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Job Title (N=364)*

Job Title	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
CEA-Ag	162	3.69	0.44	1.94	.09
CEA-FCS	121	3.84	0.46		
CEA-4-H	45	3.76	0.45		
EA-IPM	11	3.72	0.43		
EA-ENP	3	4.07	0.21		
CEA-HORT	14	3.82	0.42		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 44 shows, again there was no significant difference,  $F(5,350)=1.54$ ,  $p=.18$ , between individual non-work related factors and retention of county Extension agents by their titles.

Table 44

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Job Title (N=364)*

Job Title	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
CEA-Ag	162	3.55	0.61	1.54	.18
CEA-FCS	121	3.67	0.60		
CEA-4-H	45	3.45	0.59		
EA-IPM	11	3.42	0.59		
EA-ENP	3	4.0	0.20		
CEA-HORT	14	3.60	0.48		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was no significant difference,  $F(4,359)=1.20$ ,  $p=.31$ , between the years of employment of a county Extension agent and organizational factors as an incentive to stay with Texas Cooperative Extension, as shown in Table 45.

Table 45

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed (N=364)*

Years Employed by Texas Cooperative Extension	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
3-5	69	3.42	0.43	1.20	.31
6-10	83	3.45	0.47		
11-15	56	3.39	0.61		
16-20	26	3.56	0.59		
Over 20	130	3.53	0.53		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 46 shows no significant difference,  $F(4,359)=.57$ ,  $p=.68$ , between individual work related factors and the years of employment of the county Extension agents as an incentive to stay with Extension.

Table 46

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed (N=364)*

Years Employed by Texas Cooperative Extension	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
3-5	69	3.74	0.46	.57	.68
6-10	83	3.72	0.40		
11-15	56	3.73	0.50		
16-20	26	3.78	0.44		
Over 20	130	3.80	0.47		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Lastly, for years of employment by the county Extension agent there was no significant difference,  $F(4,359)$ ,  $p=.26$ , years and organizational factors as an incentive for agents to stay with Extension., as shown in Table 47.

Table 47

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed (N=364)*

Years Employed by Texas Cooperative Extension	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
3-5	69	3.54	0.58	1.32	.26
6-10	83	3.50	0.52		
11-15	56	3.60	0.72		
16-20	26	3.54	0.44		
Over 20	130	3.67	0.62		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As depicted in Table 48, there was no significant difference,  $F(6,346)=1.16$ ,  $p=.33$ , between organizational factors and the category county where the county Extension agents serves as an incentive to stay with Texas Cooperative Extension.

Table 48

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Category County Served (N=364)*

Category County Where You Serve	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1	17	3.34	0.57	1.16	.33
2	30	3.42	0.54		
3	47	3.46	0.46		
4	101	3.45	0.48		
5	80	3.44	0.51		
6	44	3.64	0.58		
7	34	3.52	0.61		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

There was no significant difference,  $F(6,346)=.19, p=.98$ ), between individual work related factors and the category county where the agents serves as an incentive to stay employed as an agent, as depicted in Table 49.

Table 49

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Category County Served (N=364)*

Category County Where You Serve	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1	17	3.76	0.41	.19	.98
2	30	3.80	0.50		
3	47	3.72	0.43		
4	101	3.76	0.40		
5	80	3.72	0.51		
6	44	3.79	0.50		
7	34	3.78	0.42		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

In Table 50, between individual non-work related factors and the category county where the agent serves there is no significant difference,  $F(6, 346)=.72, p=.63$ , as an incentive for a county Extension agent to stay with Extension.

Table 50

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Category County Served (N=364)*

Category County Where You Serve	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1	17	3.63	0.41	.72	.63
2	30	3.69	0.49		
3	47	3.46	0.63		
4	101	3.62	0.56		
5	80	3.59	0.63		
6	44	3.49	0.72		
7	34	3.57	0.65		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

As depicted in Table 51, there was no significant difference,  $F(2,293)=.48, p=.62$ , between how many counties the agent served in and organizational factors as an incentive to stay employed as a county Extension agent with Extension.

Table 51

*Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by How Many Counties Served (N=364)*

How Many Counties Served	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1-2	129	3.43	0.51	.48	.62
3-5	155	3.49	0.56		
Over 5	12	3.50	0.46		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean organizational factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

For individual work related factors and the number of counties the agent had served in there was no significant difference,  $F(2,293)=2.06, p=.13$ , as incentive to stay with Extension, as shown in Table 52.

Table 52

*Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by How Many Counties Served (N=364)*

How Many Counties Served	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1-2	129	3.70	0.47	2.06	.13
3-5	155	3.80	0.43		
Over 5	12	3.67	0.47		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

For the last analysis of variance in Table 53, there was no significant difference,  $F(2,293)=1.67, p=.19$ , between individual non-work related factors and the number of counties an agent served in as an incentive to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension.

Table 53

*Individual Non-Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by How Many Counties Served (N=364)*

How Many Counties Served	<i>n</i>	<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1-2	129	3.51	0.64	1.67	.19
3-5	155	3.62	0.57		
Over 5	12	3.40	0.95		

*Note:* M<sup>a</sup>: A mean individual non-work related factor score was calculated by averaging the 11 item responses; Scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY OF STUDY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary of Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension. The study used a correlational design for two major purposes: 1) to explore relationships between variable, and 2) to predict scores on one variable from subject's scores on other variables (Gall et al., 1996).

There were four specific objectives of the study: 1) to describe the demographic factors among county Extension agents who choose to stay in Extension, 2) to determine factors of why county Extension agents decide to stay in Extension, 3) to determine the nature and strength of various relationships between the factors of retention of county Extension agents, and 4) to determine the best predictors of why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension.

The stated research question was: What job retention factors are relevant for a Texas county Extension agent to decide to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension and to choose service and education as a professional career?

There have been few studies conducted to determine why county Extension agents chose to stay employed and make Extension their professional career choice. There are numerous studies in businesses and organizations to determine why employees leave (turnover) and stay (retention). Several studies were found in the literature which

discussed Extension turnover reasons (Lindner, 1998; Manton & van Es, 1985; Mowbray, 2003; and Rousan & Henderson, 1996), but no studies have been conducted to determine why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension. Employee turnover costs Texas Cooperative Extension money when employees decide to leave. Depending on the cost estimator used, for a county Extension agent whose salary is \$30,000, the estimated cost to the agency would be from \$7,185 to \$30,000. This cost multiplied by the numbers who leave annually can be quite costly to the organization. Although, the Extension turnover rate for the last five years (11%) is lower than the statewide turnover rate for other state agencies (19%) it is still important, not only for economical reasons, but to employ the best county Extension agents who provide high quality educational programs to the people of Texas.

The study was delimited to 419 Texas County Extension agents with Texas Cooperative Extension who have been employed for at least three years as of January 1, 2004. The county Extension agents included in the study have the following job designations: agriculture, natural resources, family and consumers sciences, 4-H and youth development, horticulture, integrated pest management, marine, community development, urban development, expanded nutrition, urban youth development, and health education.

A thirty-eight question web-based Likert-type scale questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous used instrument from a study of county Extension agent turnover in the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Mowbray, 2003). The instrument was divided into four sections: eleven organizational factors with one open ended question; ten individual work related factors



with one open ended question; five individual non-work related factors with one open ended question; and twelve demographic items with one open ended question.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data including means, medians, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the nature of relationships between two variables when both variables were interval level (or ratio) measurements with each variable assuming more than three values. Correlation matrix and reliability were calculated with Cronbach's alpha. Independent t-tests and analysis of variance F-tests were utilized to predict the independent variables related to retention factors. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Agricultural Sciences (SAS) software package. All observed variables, except the demographic and open-ended items, were subjective to Shapiro-Wilk test (Royston, 1983) for normality and were found to have normal distribution.

Three hundred sixty-four Texas County Extension agents responded to the questionnaire within twenty-seven days of the initial research study notice for a response rate of 87%. The Hardin-Brashears Bi-Modal method (Frazee, Hardin, Brashears, Haygood, & Smith, 2003) was utilized to improve response rate which proved to be very effective. This method utilizes several email notices to the respondents to inform them of the study, its importance, gives the web-based address to access the questionnaire, then follows up with several thank you notices for those who completed the questionnaire and reminders to those who had not responded by a certain time. There was also a choice of one of three incentive prizes to those who responded within two weeks of the initial notice.

### **Summary and Conclusions for Objective One**

The summary of the data for objective one described the demographic profile that characterizes the county Extension agents who choose to stay in Extension. The summary includes those demographic questions where the frequency percent was over 50%- except the gender question, and the percentage of both genders were included): Fifty-six percent (203) were males and 44% (161) were females, 73% (267) were married, 73% (265) had children, and 90% (327) of the respondents were white. Eighty-eight percent (319) had job titles or designations of either county Extension agent-agriculture, family and consumers sciences, or 4-H and youth development, 59% (212) have been employed for more than eleven years and 36% (130) have been employed for over twenty years, and 73% (259) of the respondents were in category counties classified as four or higher. Fifty-nine percent (213) said Extension was their first career choice, 82% (298) of the county Extension agents have served in more than one county and 56% (167) have served in three or more counties, 58% (208) have seriously thought about leaving Extension to the extent that they actually applied for another job outside of Extension, and finally 87% (310) have never left Extension and 13% (48) have left Extension and were later rehired.

The demographic factors for gender, ethnicity, and job title of the county Extension agents who responded to the questionnaire reflect closely to these same demographic factors for the entire population of county Extension agents employed by Texas Cooperative Extension as expected due to the high response rate of 87%. Higher retention rates can be reflected by the higher number of years of service. The average tenure for Texas county Extension agents is about 13 years and 59% of the respondents have been

employed for more than eleven years. It is assumed that an agent is more likely to stay in Extension if Extension was their first career choice and 59% of the respondents chose Extension first, but according to the data in this study there was not a significant difference between those who chose Extension as their first career choice and those who did not choose Extension first. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents have seriously thought about leaving Extension, although this is concerning to administration, based upon previous work from Muson (2002) the younger workers of today expect to go through numerous job changes and perhaps six seven different career in their lifetime.

### **Summary and Conclusions for Objective Two**

The purpose of objective two was to determine the factors of why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. The summary is from the county Extension agents who responded with agree and strongly agree with organizational, individual work related, and individual non-work related factors of why they choose to stay in Extension.

Ninety-seven percent of the respondents said they choose to stay because of the interesting work; 94% of the respondents said that a variety of work/scheduling is a factor of why they choose to stay; 93% of the respondents said that the individual non-work related factor of the opportunity to contribute to my community is a factor to stay with Extension; and finally 91% said that personal satisfaction is a factor to stay with Extension. Three of the four factors (excluding the opportunity to contribute to my

community) were mentioned in previous studies referred to in the literature review (Schwartz, 2001; Chambers, 2001; Chart Your Course International, 2004; and Lindner, 1998).

The five top organizational reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension are as follows: variety of work/scheduling; benefit/retirement package; no direct supervisor managing my work regularly; job security; and quality/support from Extension specialists. Forty-two percent of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that salary (compared to other educational type jobs in community) was a reason they choose to stay employed by Extension. Lastly, 40% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that opportunities for promotion/advancement was a reason they choose to stay employed as a county Extension agent.

The top five individual work related reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension are as follows: interesting work; personal satisfaction; opportunity to be creative through challenging work; and professional scheduling (flexible hours when needed). A manageable workload is a concern among the respondents, as 59% said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that a manageable workload was a reason they choose to stay employed as a county Extension agent.

The top three individual non-work related reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension are: opportunity to contribute to my community; opportunity for personal growth and development; and opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders. Fifty-two percent of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the opportunity for outside business/financial interests were a reason they choose to stay employed as a county Extension agent. Most of the comments

from the respondents were about the fact that they did not have time for outside business interests or they said that there could be a conflict of interest if they were involved in outside financial interests.

### **Summary and Conclusions for Objective Three**

The purpose for objective three was to determine the nature and strength of relationships between the factors of retention of county Extension agents. In summary, the majority of the nature and strength of relationships between organizational, individual work related, and individual non-work related factors and retention of county Extension agents exhibited a moderate relationship of .30 to .49 (Davis, 1971). However, there was a very strong relationship ( $r=.72$ ) between recognition from supervisor and understanding/fairness of supervisor as factors for county Extension agents choosing to stay with Extension. The other substantial relationship ( $r=.65$ ) exists between my professional status in the community and the opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders as a factor of why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension.

It is important for the supervisor or in the case the district Extension administrator or county Extension director to understand the importance of the recognition given to county Extension agents and the supervisor's understanding and fairness given to the county Extension agents. Recognition from supervisor was depicted in previous work done by Arthur (2001) about the top five workplace incentives, such as, personal thanks from manager, written thanks from manager, promotion for performance, public praise, and moral building meetings. These two organizational factors had a very strong

relationship for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension. The other substantial relationship existed in individual non-work related factors of the agent's professional status in the community and the opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders as a reason why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension. These are important factors to agents as it gives them the opportunity to be an integral part of their community and to know and work with key community leaders.

### **Summary and Conclusions for Objective Four**

The purpose for objective four was to determine the best predictors of why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. Independent t-tests and analysis of variance F-tests were used to measure significant differences between the means from a Likert-type scale from the questionnaire for those agents who are presently employed by Extension. By using these tests, the researcher was able to predict the organizational, individual work related, and individual non-work related factors for those agents who choose to stay with Extension

For the independent t-tests, there were two significant differences regarding gender issues as incentives to stay in Extension. Female county Extension agents ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=.50$ ) tend to agree more that organizational factors,  $t(362)=3.07$ ,  $p=.00$ , are an incentive to stay employed by Extension as compared to the male county Extension agents ( $M=3.4$ ,  $SD=.52$ ) who tend to be more neutral on organizational factors as an incentive. It appears that female agents appreciate the organizational factors, such as; variety of work scheduling, office environment/facilities/equipment, recognition from supervisor, more than the male agents. The other gender issue that had a significant

difference was with individual work related factors,  $t(362)=2.92, p=.00$ . Even though there was a significant difference between the female agents ( $M=3.83, SD=.59$ ) and male agents ( $M=3.70, SD=.44$ ) they both agreed that individual work related factors were an incentive to stay with Extension. Those individual work related factors could be such things as; interesting work, personal satisfaction, and opportunity to be creative through challenging work

There was a significant difference,  $t(359)=4.05, p=.00$ , between those agents who have thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity and organizational factors. Those agents who have thought seriously about leaving Extension ( $M=3.39, SD=.52$ ) tend to be more neutral that organizational factors; such as, variety of work scheduling, benefit/retirement package, are incentives to stay as compared to those agents who have not thought about leaving ( $M=3.60, SD=.49$ ) as they tend to agree more that organizational factors are incentives to stay with Extension. Although there was a significant difference,  $t(359)=2.81, p=.01$ , between those agents who have thought about leaving ( $M=3.71, SD=.44$ ) and those who have not thought about leaving ( $M=3.84, SD=.45$ ), they both tended to agree that individual work related factors; such as, interesting work and personal satisfaction. Lastly on the issue of those agents who have thought about leaving Extension, there was a significant difference,  $t(359)=2.00, p=.05$ , between those who thought about leaving ( $M=3.54, SD=.59$ ) and those who have not thought about leaving ( $M=3.67, SD=.57$ ) as far as individual non-work related factors; such as, opportunity to contribute to my community, however they both tended to agree that these individual non-work related factors were an incentive to stay.

The last independent t-test which showed a significant difference,  $t(356)=2.08$ ,  $p=.04$ , was between those agents who have left Extension and later rehired. Those agents who have left Extension ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.49$ ) tend to agree that organizational factors; such as, variety of work/scheduling, and benefit/retirement package, are an incentive to stay as compared to those agents who have not left Extension ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=.52$ ) who tend to be more neutral on the issue of organizational factors as an incentive to stay with Extension.

When summarizing the data from analysis of variance F-tests, there were two significant differences for ethnicity and title of county Extension agents. There was a significant difference,  $F(2,352)=3.41$ ,  $p=.03$ , between the African American agents ( $M=4.0$ ,  $SD=.35$ ) who responded to the questionnaire and the White ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=.56$ ) and Hispanic ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=.68$ ) county Extension agents, however all three groups tended to agree that individual non-work related factors; such as, the opportunity to contribute to my community was an incentive to stay with Texas Cooperative Extension

Lastly, there was a significant difference,  $F(5, 350)=2.65$ ,  $p=.02$ , between county Extension agent's job title and organizational factors. Those CEA-FCS ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=.49$ ) tended to agree that organizational factors; such as, variety of work scheduling and benefit/retirement package, is an incentive to stay in Extension more than their CEA-Ag ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=.54$ ) counterparts who tend be more neutral on this issue.

### **Study Implications**

This study's purpose was to determine the factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why they choose to stay employed with Extension. As stated in the introduction, when employees leave the agency it costs the organization a



tremendous amount of money, but more importantly it costs the people of Texas in lost service in educational programming during a vacancy. It is important for the administration of Texas Cooperative Extension to understand why agents choose to leave and more importantly to understand why they want to stay and be productive employees. As these retention factors are known and studied, practices and policies should be put into action to reduce turnover rates and increase retention rates for the long term benefit of the agency and the people of Texas.

### **Recommendations for Program Direction**

1) The first set of recommendations concerns the organizational factors for retention of county Extension agents. Extension administration should continue to market and interpret promotion and advancement opportunities for county Extension agents. Forty percent of the county Extension agents said that there were limited opportunities for advancement and promotion. At this time there are several opportunities to advance/promote throughout the system, such as transferring to other counties with more responsibilities (higher category counties); supervisory advancement opportunities (district Extension administrator, county Extension director, regional program director); obtain advanced degrees above the bachelor level; and promote on the career ladder system. The county Extension agent career ladder system is in its infancy as it has been available for three years. It is a peer review process designed to recognize agents who are making a major contribution in support of Extension educational programs in all categories of counties throughout the state (Fehlis & Willis, 2001b). There are professional recognition and salary increases attached to the progression of the

agents through four stages of promotion. According to the guidelines it is recommended that agents stay at a given level for three years before attempting to be promoted, so at this point there have been few who have promoted. Agents should devote the time it takes to deliver high quality educational programs and then to organize and develop a professional dossier package and apply for promotion.

Extension administration should continue to look for opportunities for agents to increase their salaries. Fifty-eight percent of the responding Texas county Extension agents have seriously thought about leaving Extension for other job opportunities for three major reasons: salary, lack of family time, and administration. These reasons are consistent with a study by Manton and van Es (1985) where they found salary, family relations, and routine task as major reasons for Extension agents to leave. Extension administration should consider using limited funds for bonuses and stipends for jobs well done and recognition. Also, consideration should be considered for salary supplements through grants awarded to county Extension agents.

Extension administration should define professional scheduling to employees, supervisors, and clientele will have the same understanding of the term. Variety of work and professional scheduling appealed to 94% and 84% of the respondents. Several of the open ended comments suggested that professional scheduling can be utilized, but there is no real definition. These reasons for staying with an organization are consistent with a previous survey by Chart Your Course International (2004) which found interesting work, flexibility in work hours, and challenging job assignments as major reasons why employees stay with organizations. It is not the recommendation of this researcher to suggest the agency develop a policy for compensatory or flexible time for county

Extension agents, as this could create more administrative forms, paperwork, and documentation.

The final organizational factor recommendation is that recognition from supervisor and understanding/fairness of supervisor should be emphasized among supervisors.

There was a very strong relationship ( $r=.72$ ) between recognition from supervisor and understanding/fairness of supervisor as a reason why county Extension agents choose to stay with Extension. Branham (2001) suggested coaching and rewarding employees for commitment and that managers should recognize results and be trained in career coaching. Several suggestions for these two areas are discussed in the report of the Extension spirit committee (Fehlis & Willis, 2001a). Goal one: Texas Extension employees will feel valued. Goal two: Texas Extension will foster employee pride so that employees will represent Extension in a positive, credible manner. By putting some of the suggestions into practice it should increase county Extension retention.

2) The second set of recommendations relate to individual work factors for retention of county Extension agents. Extension administration should examine the specific areas our agency can have the most impact in and delete some the nonessential or less important programs. This will allow the agents to concentrate on fewer areas and to become more efficient in those important areas. Fifty-nine percent of the county Extension agents said at times their job is not manageable as the workload is overwhelming and they are pulled in many different directions with many responsibilities. Too many work responsibilities was an organizational factor for Extension agents in Ohio to leave as identified from a previous study by Rousan and Henderson (1996).

Extension administration should continue to promote the findings of the report of the Extension spirit committee (Fehlis & Willis, 2001a) and put these strategies and practices into action. Ninety-one percent of the agents who responded to the questionnaire suggested that the opportunity for personal satisfaction was a reason they chose to stay with Extension. Goals three and four in the spirit committee report relate to these two factors of personal growth and satisfaction. Goal three: Texas Extension will conduct training and staff development to maximize job satisfaction, morale, and confidence. Goal four: Texas Extension will create an enjoyable and positive work environment and a sense of community. According to Schwartz (2001), studies as far back as the 1940's as well as many research efforts in the past few years show similar results: employees want appreciation, to be valued and respected, career growth, to contribute ideas on how work is to be done, to be a valuable part of the organization and to do meaningful work.

3) The third recommendation relates to the individual non-work factors of job retention of county Extension agents. Extension administration should clearly define the policy on outside employment, so that employees, supervisors, and clientele understand what is appropriate and what outside business interests are not appropriate for agents to be involved in. Fifty-two percent of the agents said they were concerned about outside business/financial interests. The majority of the comments stated that they could not understand how an agent who was doing their job effectively with the high workload could have time for outside Extension interests. Another concern among the agents is that many of these outside interests could be considered a conflict of interest, meaning an agent is using his professional position as a means for making extra money.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

1) Another study could be conducted to survey those agents who left Extension and were later rehired to analyze why they decided to return to Extension. A significant difference,  $t(356)=2.08, p=.04$ , was shown in the data between those agents who left Extension and later rehired as compared to those agents who never left Extension on organizational factors as incentives to stay. Those who left Extension ( $M=3.62, SD=.49$ ) tended to agree that organizational factors, such as, variety of work/scheduling, benefit/retirement package, and recognition from supervisor were incentives to stay with Extension as compared to those who have never left ( $M=3.44, SD=.52$ ) who tended to be more neutral this issue. This data is consistent with comments from agents who left for a “perceived” better opportunity only to return later to Extension for similar reasons. Also, Extension administration could provide those agents an opportunity for those agents to share their reasons for returning to current agents at professional development meetings to emphasize there are organizational factors that are good incentives to stay with Texas Cooperative Extension.

2) Further research could be conducted to define interesting and challenging work. The county Extension agents responding to the questionnaire said interesting and challenging work, 97% and 89% respectively, were important factors as incentives to stay with Extension. There could be many definitions to these two factors, so research could be devoted to further study of what these factors mean to county Extension agents. Recently, there was a research study conducted to define what “creative” work by county Extension agents means to district Extension administrators and county Extension administrators (Womack, 2004).

3) The last recommendation for future research is to study the open ended comments offered by the county Extension agents who responded to the questionnaire. There were many positive comments provided by the respondents which could be utilized in Extension recruitment and promotional brochures when attempting to recruit new employees to emphasize why people choose Extension as their professional career. The negative comments could be studied to determine the bases of them and Extension administration and agents could work together toward turning the negative comments into positives to make Texas Cooperative Extension the best organization it can be to deliver high quality and relevant educational programs to the people of Texas.

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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this survey is to determine the factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension. The results of this study will help Extension administration learn strategies to retain county Extension agents. Only agents who have been employed for at least three years on January 1, 2004 were selected for this survey. Your participation is voluntary and will remain confidential. The responses from the survey will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal specific responses from any individual respondent. Your participation will remain confidential and appreciated for its value and importance to Texas Cooperative Extension.

Instructions: Please choose the word that best describes how you feel about each of the following statements.

#### **PART I Organizational Factors**

Organizational factors are those which the organization alone can influence.

#### **I choose to stay employed as a CEA by Texas Cooperative Extension because of:**

1. Opportunities for promotion/advancement  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
2. Variety of work/scheduling (everyday brings new challenges)  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
3. Office environment/facilities/equipment  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

- |     |   |                               |                      |                     |                   |                            |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 4.  | Quality of support staff (secretaries)                        | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 5.  | Recognition from supervisor                                   | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 6.  | Understanding/fairness of supervisor                          | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 7.  | Benefit/retirement package                                    | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 8.  | Salary (compared to other educational type jobs in community) | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 9.  | Job security  | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 10. | Quality/support from Extension specialists                    | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |
| 11. | No direct supervisor managing my work regularly               | <u>Strongly Disagree</u><br>1 | <u>Disagree</u><br>2 | <u>Neutral</u><br>3 | <u>Agree</u><br>4 | <u>Strongly Agree</u><br>5 |

Please take a moment to further explain those items you answered “strongly agree” why you have stayed employed by Extension.

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## PART II Individual Work Related Factors

Individual work-related factors are those related to perception and performance which directly or indirectly affect satisfaction with the job.

**I choose to stay employed as a CEA by Texas Cooperative Extension because of:**

1. Manageable workload  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
2. Interesting work  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
3. Opportunity to travel on the job  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
4. Recognition from clientele I serve  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
5. Opportunities for professional development  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
6. Professional scheduling (flexible hours when needed)  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5
  
7. Personal satisfaction (knowing that I am “making a difference”)  

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

8. Professional relationships with co-workers and peers through professional associations.
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |
9. Opportunity to be creative through challenging work
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |
10. Opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |

Please take a moment to further explain those items you answered “strongly agree” why you choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension.

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### **PART III Individual Non-Work Related Factors**

Individual non-work factors are personal or non-work issues which influence the individual’s commitment to the job.

**I choose to stay employed as a CEA by Texas Cooperative Extension because of:**

1. Opportunity for personal growth and development
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |
2. Opportunity for outside financial interest
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |
3. My professional status in the community
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |

4. Opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |
5. Opportunity to contribute to my community
- |                          |                 |                |              |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Neutral</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Strongly Agree</u> |
| 1                        | 2               | 3              | 4            | 5                     |

Please take a moment to further explain those items you answered “strongly agree” why you choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension.

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#### **PART IV Personal and Work Characteristics**

1. Please check your present title:
- |            |                       |
|------------|-----------------------|
| CEA-Ag     | EA-IPM                |
| CEA-FCS    | CEA-Urban Development |
| CEA-UYD    | CEA-COMM              |
| CEA-HORT   | CEA-Health Ed         |
| CEA-Marine | EA-ENP                |
| CEA-NR     |                       |
- 2) Years employed by Texas Cooperative Extension:
- |               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| 3-5 years     | _____ |
| 6-10 years    | _____ |
| 11-15 years   | _____ |
| 16-20 years   | _____ |
| Over 20 years | _____ |
- 3) Population of the county where you serve:
- |                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Under 2,000     | _____ |
| 2,001-10,000    | _____ |
| 10,001-20,000   | _____ |
| 20,001-50,000   | _____ |
| 50,001 and over | _____ |
- 4) Was Extension your first career choice?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Have you served in more than one county?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_



If yes: how many?            1-2    \_\_\_\_\_  
    3-5    \_\_\_\_\_  
    Over 5    \_\_\_\_\_

- 6) Have you thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, for what reasons

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- 7) Have you left Extension then later rehired? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- 8) Was Extension your first career choice? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- 9a) Have you served in more than one county? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- 9b) If yes; how many? 1-2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3-5 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 5 \_\_\_\_\_

- 10a) Have you seriously (have applied for other jobs) thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- 10b) If yes, for what reasons? \_\_\_\_\_

- 11) Have you left Extension then later rehired? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your completing this questionnaire, your time is appreciated and the information is valuable to our organization. Please click on the submit button to finish the survey. If you want to be included in the drawing for the incentive prize for completing this document, please provide your email address below. Participation in the drawing is optional. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact **Galen Chandler** at (940) 552-9941, Ext. 228.

Yes, please enter me in the prize drawing. My e-mail address is:

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Your email address will be kept separate from the data set so your responses will remain confidential.

## APPENDIX B

## E-MAIL NOTIFICATION AND THANK YOU LETTERS

**From:** Galen Chandler

**To:** Andrews, Doug; Ballard, Faith; Brauchi, Donna C; Chadwick, Colleen; Couch, Martha E; Douglas, Tony; Dromgoole, Darrell; Durham, M. Scott; Ensor, Marvin R; Fehlis, Chester; Foster, Pamela; Fries, Elaine K; Fritz, Dale; Garza, Bertha A; Gillespie, Joan I.; Hale, Margaret; Kellam, Ramona; Leal, Fela C; Lockamy, Terry A; Major, Jett; Mapston, Cheryl; McGee, Bonnie; Mickey, Bouche; Parker, Rebecca; Ripley, Jeffrey; Robinson, Bob; Rue, Brenda; Saldana, Luis; Saldana, Ruben; Sanders, Renee; Smith, Ed; Smith, Kyle; Stone, Cody; Strickland, Mary; Taylor, Greg S; Woolley, Ron

**Date:** Mon, Mar 8, 2004 3:07 PM

**Subject:** retention study

Dr. Fehlis/Dr. Hale/Assoc. Dir's/RPD's/CED's/DEA's: In the next couple of weeks, I plan to email a CEA questionnaire across the state for my doctoral dissertation study. I wanted to give you a "heads up" on the questionnaire before the agents receive it. The title for the study is: Factors related to job retention of Texas County Extension agents. The population for the study is 419 CEA's who have been with TCE for at least 3 years. The pilot study group is those 139 CEA's employed less than 3 years. I plan to send out the email questionnaire to the pilot group next week and the official group as soon as I get the IRB approval from TAMU. I have attached the cover letter which explains the details. You are welcomed and encouraged to take a few minutes (should take 10 to 15 minutes) to complete the questionnaire yourself and offer any suggestions/comments. Most of you have been CEA's in your career, so it will be interesting to know why you have stayed with Extension. Any words of encouragement you can give to your CEA's who will be asked to complete the questionnaire would be greatly appreciated. The questionnaire can be viewed and answered at: <http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html>. I want to thank Dr. Hale for asking Dr. Rey Santos to put my questionnaire on a website, this should greatly help the response rate. A big thanks to Dr. Santos for doing this project for me and to Dr. Lippke for allowing Rey to work with me. Thanks Galen

Galen D. Chandler  
District Extension Administrator  
District 3-Rolling Plains  
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Vernon, Texas 76385  
940-552-9941 ext. 228 (office)  
940-553-1331 (home)  
940-886-8331 (cell)  
940-553-4657 (fax)

**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** pilot retention study group  
**Date:** Fri, Apr 2, 2004 1:47 PM  
**Subject:** CEA job retention study

Dear Selected County Extension Agents:

I am conducting a statewide survey on factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents for a doctoral dissertation. Those agents who have a least 3 years tenure with TCE will be the official population, but I need your help to "pilot test" the on-line questionnaire for reliability and validity before I send the official questionnaire. I know your time is valuable and important and the questionnaire should only take 10-15 minutes to complete. Please access the questionnaire at:

<http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html>.

The data you provide will be used to calculate valuable tests for reliability and validity about the questionnaire and to assure the questions are sound. Your responses will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal specific responses from any individual respondent, so the study will be kept confidential.

As an incentive for your participation, those of you who respond by Friday, April 16th, I will randomly select one of the respondents to receive a \$75 Target gift card. If you have any questions about the study or want to provide any written or oral comments to me regarding the study or questionnaire, please feel free to do so. I really appreciate your time in completing the questionnaire and this research will be valuable to our organization to retain high quality county Extension agents. Thank you for your time. Thanks Galen

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940-886-8331 (cell)  
940-553-4657 (fax)  
g-chandler@tamu.edu

**CC:** Cummings, Scott R.; DEA/RPD/Assoc. Dir/hale/fehlis; Frazee, Steven; Santos, J. Rey; Watts, Shirley

**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** pilot retention study group  
**Date:** Mon, Apr 12, 2004 7:21 PM  
**Subject:** CEA retention study

Dear Selected County Extension Agents:

For those of you who have completed the questionnaire for the pilot research study: Factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents- THANK YOU!!. To date there has been 53 of 137 respondents to the questionnaire. For those of you who have not responded, its not too late to respond to the questionnaire and to be eligible for the incentive prize of a \$75 Target gift card. You must respond by Friday, April 16 by 5 pm to be eligible for the drawing.

I am asking those agents who have less than 3 years tenure with TCE (January 1, 2004) to serve as the pilot study group to determine reliability and validity before I send out the official questionnaire. I am very thankful for those agents who responded back to me with some corrections to my instrument (that is reason why I wanted to test it).

Please access the questionnaire at: <http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html>. Your responses will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal any specific responses from any individual respondent, so the study will be kept confidential. I appreciate your time in completing the questionnaire and this research data will be valuable to our organization to retain high quality county Extension agents. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions, please give me a call. Thanks Galen

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g-chandler@tamu.edu

**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** cea retention study  
**Date:** Tue, Apr 13, 2004 8:58 AM  
**Subject:** CEA job retention study

Dear Selected County Extension Agents:

On Friday, April 16, you will be receiving an email notifying you of a research study entitled: Factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents. Your participation is strictly voluntary, but extremely important to the overall success of the project. The agents who have at least 3 years tenure (as of January 1, 2004) with TCE is the official population for the study- there are 419 of you who have been selected. The responses from the questionnaire will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal specific responses from any individual respondent, so the study will be kept confidential.

Your time is valuable and important, so the questionnaire should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete. As an incentive, those who participate will be eligible for a drawing to receive a choice of one of the following: Throckmorton County dove hunt (2 day, 2 person, does not include meals/lodging) or a \$150 Target gift card or a pesticide software bundle worth \$338. To be eligible you must respond by Friday, April 30th.

Your participation in this study is important to our organization as we seek ways to recruit, hire, and retain high quality professional educators to provide educational programs and services to the people of Texas. I look forward to your responses and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you Galen Chandler

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g-chandler@tamu.edu

**CC:** Cummings, Scott R.; DEA/RPD/Assoc. Dir/hale/fehlis; Frazee, Steven; Santos, J. Rey

**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** cea retention study  
**Date:** Fri, Apr 16, 2004 8:05 AM  
**Subject:** CEA job retention study

County Extension Agents

You have been selected to participate in a doctoral research study through the Agricultural Education department at Texas A&M University. The project title is: Factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents. Texas Cooperative Extension is aware of some of the reasons why employees leave our organization, but I plan to put a positive twist on this as I expect to learn why agents choose to stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension. The results of the project is very important to Extension administration as the agency seeks ways to recruit, hire and retain high quality professional educators to provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas.

Your participation is voluntary, but extremely important to the overall success of the project. County Extension agents who have been employed for at least three years on January 1, 2004 were selected for this study. The total population for the study is 419. The responses from the questionnaire will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal specific responses from any individual respondent, so the study will be confidential.

I appreciate your time and participation. As an incentive, those who participate will be eligible for a drawing to receive a choice of one of the following: Throckmorton County dove hunt (2 day, 2 person, does not include meals/lodging) or a \$150 Target gift card, or a pesticide software bundle worth \$338 consisting of PestCalc for Windows ( a pesticide rate calculation software) and AgroKeeper for Windows (a pesticide application record keeping software). To be eligible you must respond to the questionnaire by April 30th. The drawing will be held at 5pm on April 30th.

The questionnaire should take only about 10-15 minutes. You can access the questionnaire at

<http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html>.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board- Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subject's rights, the institutional Review Board may be contacted through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice-President for Research at 979-845-8585 ([mwbuckley@tamu.edu](mailto:mwbuckley@tamu.edu)).

Again, thank you for your time and participation in this project and the research efforts of Texas Cooperative Extension. If you have any questions, please give me a call at 940-552-9941, ext. 228, email at [g-chandler@tamu.edu](mailto:g-chandler@tamu.edu). or write to me at PO Box 2159, Vernon, Texas 76385 or you may contact my committee chairman, Dr. Scott

Cummings, Assistant Department Head and Program Leader for Extension Education and Extension Specialist at 979-847-9388, email at s-cummings@tamu.edu. or write at Scoates Hall 104B, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-2116.

Thanks, Galen

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940-553-4657 (fax)  
g-chandler@tamu.edu

**CC:** Cummings, Scott R.; DEA/RPD/Assoc. Dir/hale/fehlis; Frazee, Steven;  
Santos, J. Rey

**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** cea retention study  
**Date:** Fri, Apr 23, 2004 10:30 AM  
**Subject:** Thanks/Reminder

Dear Selected County Extension Agents:

I want to thank each of you who has completed the questionnaire for the research study: Factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents. The response rate as of today is 60% which is great, but my goal is 80%. The results should be very interesting and will be shared when I have interpreted all the data. Your responses have been very beneficial to the success of this study.

For those of you who have not responded, I'd like to remind you to please take a few minutes (10-15 minutes) to complete the online questionnaire at the following website: <http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html>. Your participation is voluntary, but extremely important to the success of the project, as a high response rate is a more accurate measurement of the attitudes of most of the Texas county Extension agents. The responses from the questionnaire will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal specific responses from any individual respondents, so the study will be confidential.

As an incentive for your participation, those who respond to the questionnaire by April 30th will be eligible for a drawing to receive a choice of one of the following: Throckmorton County dove hunt (2 day, 2 person, does not include meals/lodging) or a \$150 Target gift card or a pesticide software bundle worth \$338 ( Pestcalc and AgroKeeper for Windows, a pesticide rate calculator and application record keeping software, respectively). The drawing will be held at 5pm on April 30th. Thanks for your participation and in the research of Texas Cooperative Extension. Galen

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[g-chandler@tamu.edu](mailto:g-chandler@tamu.edu)

**CC:** Cummings, Scott R.; DEA/RPD/Assoc. Dir/hale/fehlis; Frazee, Steven; Santos, J. Rey



**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** cea retention study  
**Date:** Thu, Apr 29, 2004 2:50 PM  
**Subject:** retention study

Selected County Extension Agents:

Thank you again for the completing the questionnaire for the research study: Factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents. As of today, the response has been excellent 71% or 394 respondents. My goal is 80%, so thanks to you I plan to make the goal.

For those of you who have not responded, I'd like to remind you to please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire at the following website: <http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html>. Remember the incentive prizes (Must respond by 5pm, April 30-tomorrow): Throckmorton County dove hunt (2 person, 2 day) or a \$150 Target gift card or a pesticide software bundle worth \$338. The drawing will be tomorrow, April 30 for those who have responded. If you have questions, please give me a call or email. Thanks again, Galen.

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[g-chandler@tamu.edu](mailto:g-chandler@tamu.edu)

**CC:** Cummings, Scott R.; Frazee, Steven; Santos, J. Rey

**From:** Galen Chandler  
**To:** nonresponders or no prize list- retention study  
**Date:** Wed, May 5, 2004 10:21 AM  
**Subject:** CEA retention study

Dear Selected County Extension Agents:

I am conducting a doctoral research study titled: Factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents. I am contacting you in regards to this study as you either responded to the initial questionnaire emailed on 4-16-04 or later and chose not to participate in the incentive prize drawing or you have not responded to the questionnaire. I know you are busy, but your response to this data base is important to bring validity and reliability to this research study.

Due to separate data bases to insure confidentiality, I cannot distinguish between nonresponders and those who responded but chose not be included in the drawing. If you have responded, thank you very much, and please forgive me for contacting you again. If you have not responded, please take a few minutes (10-15) to go to this website. The website can be accessed easily at this address: <http://eit-data.tamu.edu/jobret/jobret.html> The responses from the questionnaire will be aggregated and analyzed through a statistical software package and will not reveal specific responses from any individual respondent, so your individual responses cannot be identified back to you.

Thank you and I appreciate your time and interest in this study. When the results have been interpreted and analyzed, I will be sharing the information by several venues Thanks. Galen

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## APPENDIX C

## ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS- OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

I grew up in the 4-H program and believe in the educational benefit youth can gain by participating in core activities: livestock projects, leadership development, etc. If it weren't for my strong belief in these activities I would have sought employment elsewhere. I also benefit from the time flexibility. Actually I am currently being interviewed for a sales position with Purina in which the starting base before commission is around 10,000 more than my current position. It would take realistically 7 years in extension to get to this point.

One of the best professional positions a female can hold in a rural area in terms of pay and benefit package

With current economics, there is a limited choice of positions in my field of study at this time outside of Extension.

I enjoy doing my job the way I deem necessary. And I enjoy the knowledge of the support staff that Extension offers me as a means of supporting my job.

I like the flexibility which allows me the opportunity to spend time with my kids and wife where I can participate in their activities.

Flexibility of day to day tasks, etc. - no two days are ever alike. Also like the unique challenges.

I enjoy working with youth without being directly in the classroom each day. I also enjoy the agriculture field and I am able to work with livestock and producers as well.

I am the master of my own fate in this profession. I control my own success.

Most of my direct supervisors have been fair/understanding but one stands out as individual that that should have never been selected as a DED - very poor supervisory skills. Also, there has been a definite unfairness across AG & FCS lines within an office staff. I.E. - Ag DED would require one thing & FCS DED another and the FCS one was a stricter code.

Personal satisfaction of working with and helping people in need is the main reason for doing this job.

The opportunity to assist people with problems.

Opportunities to further education, personally and professionally at lower or no cost.

Enjoy working with people and the feeling of helping others.

Having been effected by RIF, I can not vouch for job security.

Flexibility and new challenges each day are what keep me in.

The opportunity to truly make a positive impact in the quality of life for both clientele and agents.

It is difficult to feel confidence in our job security after being riffed. I either had to change from a 4-H agent to an FCS agent or move clear across the state, if I was to remain in Extension. It was a difficult choice and I never felt like it fully appreciated at the state level that there were those of us that chose to stay in extension.

Honestly, I stay with extension because I enjoy working with the youth and believe in the 4-H program.

I am with Extension because I enjoy teaching and helping the youth and families of Denton County. The enjoy no direct supervisor however if we had one it might help the agents who work better than they report.

My husband and I have 3 children who will all be attending college at the same time (Freshman, Sophomore, and Senior) in the next few years and the salary from my job is helping us with their college savings. In our county, well-paying jobs are hard to come by (although Extension could pay better), and when the opportunity for this position came open, I took it.

The only reason I have chosen to stay is for the insurance, but due to the increased cost, I am not sure.

Job flexibility; ability to focus on subjects that most interest me (within parameters of job description). Challenge of new opportunities; making a difference

The supervisor that I had for the first twelve years I was employed with Extension was critical to my tenure. She was extremely supportive and nurturing. She fostered teamwork among the agents that she supervised. We would not have thought of leaving. My second supervisor, while not quite as nurturing, was non the less just as supportive. She knew what I was doing, supported me, and was there when I needed her.

Making a difference in peoples lives by helping them with problem is immeasurable. Either you like to do it or you don't.

Retirement package and insurance were the primary factors I have stayed.

### Professional Development, opportunity to learn

I felt much more confident with job security a few years earlier. While I still feel some sense of security, there is much less now than earlier in my career.

I have chosen to stay employed by Extension because it has allowed me the opportunity to work with a wide variety of people from across the state, not only co-workers but the people of Texas. Being able to make a positive difference in the lives of others is one of the main reasons I stay with this job.

I like my work!

I enjoy the work. Helping people

I enjoy working with people and like the flexibility to create and maintain my own schedule. I do not enjoy having to fill out my own award applications for recognition. Rarely get any tangible thank you for our hard work.

Difficulty finding other positions of interest outside of Extension. Enjoyment of providing general public with solutions to their problems.

I began with the Extension Service in 1974 because it allowed me to be able to work with youth and agricultural producers on a day to day basis. I feel that is still the stronghold primarily in rural counties where I have always worked. Also, for us older heads that had both teacher and civil service retirement programs, it is a good investment for the future.

Extension can be fun at times. There seems to be more and more things that need to be justified with paper work rather than just doing the job. It would be nice to be able to spend more time in the field with clientele rather than having to explain why we are doing what were doing.

Extension offers many challenges, which make the job interesting and fun. Once Extension work ceases to be fun it will be time to seek other opportunities for professional development. Having said that, challenges and fun are secondary to job satisfaction as it relates to making a difference in the lives of people.

I enjoy working with people in the community. I enjoy having challenges with the 4-H & Youth Program.

I really enjoy the opportunities that are provided to me thus far.

The salary and the workload demands are getting further apart. I hope that I am right, that we have job security. When you listen to our administration we are not getting

the job done. It is hard to have good morale among employees when administration will not take any blame in the inability of possibly keeping our funding in the future. If they would let agents have a more involved role in working with legislators I believe funding would be easier. After all we are the ones that live across the state and know what the voters want.

Extension is a lot like being self employed, you don't have a supervisor in the next office watching over you. You still have to get the job done, but it is on your own schedule.

Flexibility of the job...hours, the ability to go to school, etc.

Even though I think I'm doing a good job and spend countless hours working for this organization, I DO NOT get any recognition from my supervisor and usually get criticized for not doing little, insignificant things that are not relevant to the outcome of the programs. It is hard to want to continue working hard when it does not seem to make any difference.

I do enjoy working with a variety of clients. There is never a dull moment. Our county court is also very supportive and this can make a huge difference. Through their support our office was able to upgrade our office equipment, etc. But this was through our ongoing efforts. Our office staff is great but, again, this varies from county to county and is not dependent on Extension Administration efforts.

Helping other people. I truly love people and helping them with their Agric. or 4-H Youth development. I grew up in Extension and 4-H, my parents truly believed in EXTENSION WORK.

Opportunity to do quality , relevent work ( 4-H families , Ag. producers and county residents)and events that positively affect individuals and families

The variety of day to day activeties is the most apealing thing to me the oportunity to learn new things also appeals to me. Although these oppertunities can become overwhelming at times.

I stayed with Extension because of benefits.However insurance cost benefits are costing Ext.employees more money than ever.With raises being almost non existant benefits need to improve!!!!!!

Significant changes in the structure of the organization have not always offered employees the opportunity to switch positions or employers, without penalties. Long term employment decisions therefore are challenged by organizational changes.

The main reason I joined Extension and continue to work here is that as an agent I am making a difference in peoples lives and the fact that at the end of the day I can look back and have tangible proof of things that have come to fruition through my direct

efforts and involvement, whether it is a new 4-H program, a producer increasing his profitability, introducing kids to a new learning experience or some new facility or

center. This sense of accomplishment coupled with being held in high regard in the community in the county in which I live is another very important factor.

I enjoy the being kept informed by the latest research publications that come out of Texas A&M. I also enjoy working with the majority of the families that are in my program, even though there are a select few who can make things miserable at times.

I like being able to set my schedule to meet the needs of my clientele. I like developing programs that specifically meet those needs. I feel I have control over what I do and do not feel micromanaged. I like the flexibility that Extension offers.

Extension allows one to be creative in developing educational programs that best serve area clientele. Recognition by clientele is one of the most obvious rewards for working for extension. Better salary recognition would make this an ideal job.

I enjoy the flexibility that my job offers...(i.e. if I have a night meeting that lasts until 8-9 pm, I don't have to be in the office right at 8 am like some jobs).

I enjoy my job because of the variation in the day to day responsibilities, working with youth and stock shows.

Relationships with fellow agents through association membership as well as office friendships.

Freedom of the job, like the kind of work, benefits/RETIREMENT

I truly love the variety of this job. My supervisor has been an excellent supporter and aid in professional development.

I really enjoy the livestock in both 4h and adult. Things like stock shows judging contest and livestock work with producers help me stay. Added reports and all the other things we have to do now to justify our jobs is to overwhelming. WE spend more time doing meanial work than we do out helping people.

The variety of the work environment is very beneficial to keep from becoming stagnant. But the more you start to feel that the top of the organization is failing to back you in your job, that more you feel that the time for getting out is getting close. In others words, sometimes it feels that the top adminstration doesn't not want to back its agents, they are just there to do the "issue" work.

I receive personal and professional satisfaction when working with families and they make changes to improve where they are at in their personal lives. I receive more positive feedback from the participants in my program, than Extension, and that is who I work for - the people.

Compared to Ag teachers, young CEA's make far less in term of salary. However, many older agents resent the fact that a young CEA make as much as they do, so it causes some problems.

Extension allows me to work with a variety of people. I can work with the youth of the county and ag producers. I like the variety of each day. I feel like we should increase salaries for those serving as County Extension Agents.

Personal satisfaction of serving the public.

It provides the ability to make a difference in the lives of people, so long as we don't get caught up in all the paperwork and red tape. Recognition from DEA's/RPD's would be great as opposed to having to self-apply/nominate for all awards. Our job salaries are often compared to that of teachers. Salaries are not comparable when you factor in the amount of time CEA's work on nights and weekends (plus summers). Would like to see more specialists providing information on tried and true techniques.....as opposed to data figures. It's useless to relay only figures to a rancher, when what they need is the actual method that is feasible to their business. CEA's need to focus on education, not be forced into doing research....that's what the specialists were hired to do. We don't need the added responsibilities of research looming over the heads of CEA's when their calendars are already full of educational programs. In order to maintain continuity within counties, job vacancies need to be filled PROMPTLY.

Taking the university research based information to the people of my county is and has always been a very appealing part of my job. Helping residents to know about and adopt new technology to improve their quality of life makes my job rewarding.

I like my job because of the variety of people and activities that I am involved. I enjoy the fact that no two days are ever quite the same.

The support of the public in counties that appreciate what we do.

Extension has given me opportunities to grow, stay challenged and know people that I would not have otherwise known and worked with.

Extension should be an organization that identifies problems/concerns of local people and then we using research based information help them answer their problems or concerns. In Texas there is too much top down programming. Little to no appreciation shown for work done by agents from District Administrator.



Understanding/fairness of supervisor and Extension in general are factors that have made me consider changing careers. Salary is certainly not enough to deal with some of the issues we are asked to handle, but the recognition from clientele makes up for that.

I enjoy the freedom to plan and conduct my applied research projects to answer questions based on my observations. I am in charge of my educational programming and applied research.

This a bad time because of al the reorganization that is taking place. With any reorganizational process there is naturally a time that roles must be defined, we are in that time. The job security is more in question now than in any time of my lengthy tenure. It appears that the faster older employees are out of the picture the faster changes can be made. It is the opinion of many extension workers that supervisors are only interested in climbing the ladder. If the problem does not directly apply to them, then ignore it. They do not want to make anyone mad that could bring heat on them. There is no respect for employees and the job they do. If a person in a county has a complaint against an agent that agent is GUILTY until he proves himself innocent. Too much back stabbing. Job related stress is at an all time high. Administration has set their course and will not listen to the people they are asking to do the job. All they want to do is give lip service to questions. Self examination is necessary on all levels.

Extension has a good reputation. It has been around a long time. Also because this is a service that is available to everyone.

I have the opportunity to live in a place I feel is ideal for raising my children.

I think the opportunities for advancement are there if you do a good job. The variety of work and being able to do your own scheduling has been a big + for me. The office enviornment has been generally good in every county that I have been in and I have always had good equipemnt to work with. The Commissioners court has been very cooperative in providing what every has been necessary.

Honestly, at this point in my life, I can not afford to change jobs, lose teacher retirement, and find better benefits. As the primary breadwinner for my family, I can not risk losing these things just to find something I may be happier in. I like the freedom of not being micro-managed, and do appreciate the support each of my supervisors have given me to create my own programming and follow through with it as I see fit.

Because of the benefits Extension can offer to youth. Other than teaching in a school setting, Extension offers the most successful teaching of life skills to youth.

It is my perception that there is a general feeling throughout Extension that Agent's with over 20 years of experience are no longer valued. They are seen as more a liability because they have reached a higher pay scale and Extension can place a very inexperienced Agent in the same position and pay them less. Administration needs to

start listening to the Agent's concerns instead of giving the same "pat" answers over and over to their questions. They ask for input, then appear to be offended by the responses. Is this questionnaire going to be the same?

Daily variety and range of people that you get to work with.

The salary issue is important to me, but is not the most important. The pay compared to private industry is low, when I started for TCE I took about a \$14,000 pay cut. This was my decision, so I am not complaining, just letting you know. Positive aspects are that my supervisor is excellent at helping out with our jobs and giving guidance when we need it. His understanding is very helpful and greatly appreciated.

We have made this our home and spouse's employment also had a factor in staying in Extension.

I enjoy the prestige within my community. I have pride in my work and folks here look to me for answers to problems and help. I really enjoy working with folks one-on-one.

A flexible schedule and the opportunity to do a job with a tremendous amount of personal control is a great benefit. I really liked being my own boss and the lack of day-to-day control from supervisors is a great benefit. I realize not all people can work under the situation. One of my favorite things about extension is the opportunity to teach. I like placing myself in a teaching situation. This job allows me to do that at a better rate of pay than in school teaching without all the headaches of dealing with undisciplined children.

My work is important to the well being of my clientele.

Supervisors have supported me through challenging health issues over the past few years.

Sometimes I feel that there is too much micro managing by supervisors.

I enjoy serving and working with people, especially farmers, ranchers, and wildlife managers. I enjoy my freedom in doing what I feel needs to be done without a supervisor looking over me each day. I enjoy the outside part of the job, and wish we had less office time and paper work.

Creativity to address county issues with local residents and to witness results of efforts in educating and working with community groups being an informal educator, opportunity to do applied research, and most important is opportunity to help people.

The ability to manage my own schedule, the flexibility in my work schedule and the benefits/retirement have been the main reasons I have chosen to continue as an Extension employee.

I like being able to set my own schedule and enjoy our work environment in the County I am in now.

I believe in the purpose of Extension and have seen the positive influences it can have on a community and county. I am a loyal person that does not give up easily. I tend to see things through and am a hard worker. I have chosen to stay with extension for the time being because I have found those traits in others within the organization.

Opportunities for advancement are non-existent unless you are willing to move around like military. Salary is probably not comparable to an educator of similar experience such as a school principal. Benefits are declining all the time. I enjoy working with producers. I do appreciate our district extension director. He is a fair person.

I choose to stay employed by Extension because of the immediate gratification I get when I've made a difference in people's lives, and because I get to work with the two things I love most, kids and animals.

Old supervisor was very good, new not so good, responses would vary here 2 years ago -- salary is not high compared to administrative type educational teachers, but if I wanted more salary I could look elsewhere -- job security in question with struggling budgets every legislative session.

I can see the changes We make with the people with work with.

I truly enjoy the one on one with people and my community. Extension is viewed as place of knowledge and the community recognizes that and makes my work enjoyable. I greatly enjoy the 4-H program in my county and all youth work. That is my primary focus in Extension.

I enjoy helping/educating others with problems. There are so many folks that need help on technical issues that I can provide in turn they can go out and do the task themselves and save money and feel good doing and help keep the environment clean for all Texans. Yes, salary

could be more competitive (ie, compared to school teachers who work significantly less time and get more pay in some more urbanized locations,), especially for non-county funded positions, (ie, EA-IPM, there is no cost of living adjustments for these positions such as for Ag agents)

The idea of leaving Extension has crossed my mind, but the benefits, annual and sick leave policies, etc. are wonderful! There are no jobs out there that have benefits like this. I truly enjoy the diversity of the work week and the flexible schedule. Also, the clientele that we work with (specifically the 4-H youth) make this job so important to me.

Flexibility- I enjoy working for an organization who is understanding in regards to having a flexible schedule. There are many nights out of the work week and Saturday's that CEA's work. It is nice to know that we are able to take care of personal matters prior

to coming into the office to handle personal issues. From what I hear from friends employed by other organizations, they are not allowed the flexibility during the work week. They are expected to handle personal issues on the weekend.

I enjoy the prestige of the position and feel that I can make a difference in the lives of our residents.

I love working with youth. I have been involved with Extension all my life.

Working with people in counties that appreciate you.

The benefits package which includes Civil Service Retirement is one of the major reasons I have stayed with Extension.

Allows a variety of work (ie. no two days are ever the same)

I appreciate being kept up to date on subject matter and provided new curriculum. I still have to do some on my own which allows creativity and ways to meet needs of community.

Negatives: The opportunity for advancement does not seem great--dossier review seems overly stringent to move up the career ladder. My Extension office is not state of the art--facilities and equipment could use improvement. State specialists are not particularly helpful or not available (too few for such a large state). Positives: I have a very supportive supervisor who knows how to manage me to get the best results--I appreciate his influence. My supervisor, although involved in my output, does not micro-manage my day-to-day activities--very helpful.

I believe in the mission. There is gratification in teaching others, especially youth.

I enjoy it.

I don't feel there is much opportunity for advancement/promotion, the salary increases are few (numerous agents with less time in than myself are making more money); the benefits package needs improvement, it appears to be to be better for some than others.

I have found support from the Extension "family" through good and bad times

I am very fortunate to have an OUTSTANDING secretary, office and commissioners court to work with.

The difference that we as extension agents can make in the lives of our clientele.

I enjoy working with Texas Cooperative Extension. I love sharing information

and helping the people in my county. I love meeting new people and also being a role model for the youth of today. Providing services to the community that will enable residents to improve the quality of their lives. I enjoy working with other Extension professionals in our district.

Civil Service Retirement and OPR. Have worked for 28 years - so I remember "the good ol' days" when this job was FUN and very satisfying.

Job security is an interesting topic. Honestly, I am very unsure about the future of Extension. I would love to keep my job. I love what I do, but how secure are we? Job benefits (insurance) used to be one of the positive aspects of Extension. It is NOT anymore.

This survey is way over due. I have had supervisors that are and still are the reason I stayed with Extension in the first ten years of employment. But I recently had a DED Ag supervisor and the FCS DED at the time that did not support agents and also avoided controversy thus if I was early in my career I would have resigned and took legal action. Hiring was handled by not allowing males to become 4-H Agents. This just told me that we now have a disadvantage in being male . I can tell you as of today I still love every minute of Extension work but only two benefits have kept me on (Civil Service Retirement and Medical Benefits). It looks like the benefits are going south as did the retirement with the Fed.

Retirement is a plus if one is a Civil Service member but those on SS are beginning to realize the major disadvantage. Benefits (Insurance) ok but this is rapidly losing its luster as rates increase and services decline. Job has been excellent, however I do have concerns about the future.

The opportunity to see growth or change from clientele participating in programming.

Nature of the job is associated with Agriculture and is associated with helping people solve various problems. Something new and challenging everyday.

My continued 20-year employment with CES is directly related to the personal satisfaction gained from the belief that by working with ag producers, through demonstration work and production meetings, I personally make a difference in the approach to their farming operations; Number 2: By having the opportunity to work with children, through 4-H, I make a significant difference in their lives. The above factors of salary, recognition (career ladder) and administrative support in times of controversy are well below acceptable levels.

Support and recognition from supervisor help keep your morale and self-esteem up.

My work schedule flexibility is worth a lot to me, as long as the work gets done, I can go and come without having a supervisor's thumb on me all the time. Working lots of nights and weekends balances out somewhat with a flexible work schedule. Benefits are still fairly good compared to other jobs. I have had several opportunities to leave

Extension over the past 16 years, and every time I weigh out the jobs Extension still wins due to benefits and job security.

Job security was a big plus until the recent RIF. I do not feel it is as stable as I once did.

Having both Civil Service Retirement and ORP.... makes a big difference when you reach retirement. I feel fortunate to have been employed before we lost Civil Service retirement.

Left another career 20+ years ago to better pay, that career now pays better. Specialist support was great for years, number and quality of specialists has declined to little help. Enjoy working with and helping people.

The retirement (Civil Service) is very valuable to me. I have a little over 3 years until I can claim that retirement. Normally my work environment is very pleasant but our new county judge is taking some of our job security away from us due to the budget challenges. We are losing a secretary and possibly some office space. Unfortunately, we are unsure as to what to expect. I like the versatility of the job and the many opportunities. I have a great supervisor and that makes it much easier to want to do my job.

I stay employed by Texas Cooperative Extension because it meets my career expectations. In the five years I have worked I have been extremely satisfied in my career choices. It allows me to work with a diverse group of individuals and to teach without being confined to a classroom setting. No day is ever the same!

I like the flexibility in my job that I am not doing the same old thing every day. The health and retirement benefits were one of the deciding factors that convinced me to go to work for Extension.

I enjoy the challenge of working with producers who are on the cutting edge. Extension forces you to stay current on new technologies and practices which I enjoy. Also having the opportunity to work with a diversity of clientele is enjoyable.

Always learning something new.

The total Extension experience is extremely supportive of a well-rounded, healthy, fulfillment of the expressive life. We are recognized as leaders in the communities in which we work and are looked to for help. Helping people live productive lives is a very fulfilling experience. The culture of Extension engendered

through the administrative staff supports this philosophy of people helping people and gives the latitude necessary for agents to choose their own areas of work based on local needs. The specialists and information resources necessary to fulfill the educational goals are supported by the administration. I don't believe the same high degree of professional and personal fulfillment can be found in any other profession.

Promotion and advancement are not important to me - friendly, professional working environment is and the satisfaction I get from my job and working with the clientele. Being able to transfer to another county and position have been important, but I have never been interested in advancing higher than a county level position or to the job responsibilities associated with district and state levels.

I just enjoy this job and being "the master of my own fate".

I enjoy the variety of tasks associated with my job (although it's easy to get spread too thin). One of the biggest factors for my staying with Extension has been the benefits package offered through the University. However, as the state portion of the benefits has been reduced, Extension (and state agencies) becomes less competitive in comparison with similar organizations, or industry.

There are other job opportunities that provide a better salary and still offer the variety that Extension does. The benefits/pension packages and job security have always made Extension the better choice. Unfortunately as the benefits decrease and the security ebbs away, the benefits of a better salary, that can be invested for the future, are beginning to look better all the time. Love of and loyalty to Extension are really all that keeps me here right now. The work load of paperwork and deadlines that never end in addition to the actual work load is starting to cause major strains on even the most dedicated of us.

One of the biggest problems we have is the balance and trying to understand co-workers such as FCS coworkers. They are not challenged within their jobs, they have canned programs and in my situation do not have any programming that is relevant.

At the beginning of my career I had awful supervisors. For the last 12 years I have had wonderful supervisors. I enjoy the opportunity getting paid to help others.

The work is interesting. I enjoy helping people. I like the people I work with.

I am self motivated and like working with 4-H youth (top notch youth). I also like the flexibility of the job. The flexibility of the job. Sometimes the night meetings are so many that it's often more than I and family can stand, but then follows a period where I have flexibility in my schedule. I guess what I'm saying is that the flexibility of the job is nice, but most certainly earned through a lot of overtime by night meetings and traveling.

Extension benefits by far are some of the best that is offered by any state agency. I also like the fact that our "jobs" are not the standard 9 to 5 and that there is so much variety throughout any given workday.

I enjoy the area of education, and I get a lot of satisfaction from helping other people.

Close to retirement.

I've worked 20 years now and have accumulated some 160K in ORP. If I were to retire, that would last about 4 years right now to maintain the same standard of living. The administrations decision to take Extension out of civil service retirement has been a great disservice to it's employees. Retiring at 55 with 30 years service will not be possible. opportunities for respected, research-based training, recognized by other entities as worthwhile

I think the rewards of working with people especially youth and being able to see their success is a key to job satisfaction.

I enjoy the flexibility in work schedule and the diversity that the job brings. Benefits have been great although over the past two years the medical and perscription drug benefits are increasing at an alarming rate which makes it not to enticing for new employees. When it comes to office facilities and equipment, each county is different. Not all counties are working with the same resources which can make the job challenging and we can't provide support to clientele as other counties might be able to. There needs to be understanding from administration that we are not all equal when it comes to offices and equipment. Job security has been great although legislative cuts have made the job somewhat scary.

Civil service retirement option has kept me on board. Those of us who have built a program in one county have missed out on many of the pay incentives realized by employees who are mobil.

Need to stay in the area due to spouse's job. Belief in mission of 4-H and Extension.

The main reason I enjoy working for extension is being able to work with people and assist them. Flexible Work Schedule.

I enjoy working for an agency that is known for its: quality of employees, professionalism shown by most, and caring additude for people in each community.

Being able to help the clientele of the county and the state of Texas.

I am passionate about my work. I love my job because Extension has given me the opportunity to be as creative as I choose to be. I understand that my success in



Extension depends on me and my willingness to try different things until I find the right one that works. It is liberating to know I work for an agency that allows me to take calculated risks, experiment with new methodologies, and if for some reason I don't succeed, I know I can try again and still have the support and understanding of my supervisors. Thank you Extension!

The job is not boring; has lots of variety; I have autonomy to a certain degree in how I do my job.

I enjoy being mostly in charge of my schedule. I like having variation in my activities and the freedom to pursue new program areas and develop new materials.

I enjoy the work because it allows me to further my knowledge about agriculture. I also enjoy the willingness of the clientele to learn and be progressive.

The main reason that I stayed with Extension is the belief that what I do truly helps people in their daily lives. The information we provide is objective and unbiased. We work with people in positive ways to help them solve problems that they want help in solving. Their gratitude and appreciation helps to compensate for long hours and sometimes the feeling of low pay. The other reason that I have stayed with Extension is our retirement program. Being on optional retirement and Civil Service is truly one of the greatest benefits of my career in Extension. The Employees who came on board after 1984 do not have the same incentive to stay in Extension because Social Security and Teachers Retirement are not as good as what the older employees have had. I think that is the greatest benefit packages we had when I started and I don't think new employees have it as good.

I enjoy the variety of educational programs and youth audiences that I am able to interact with on a daily basis. I have enjoyed the professional affiliations with the local community. I have found it difficult to connect with other Extension Staff throughout the District. The Career Ladder and the process of Peer Evaluation is political standards do not recognize individuals who consistently perform their job and take on other duties. Work load is excessive, too many week ends, nights and too little recognition.

Some of my best friends are county agents. There is an unwritten code of brotherhood and honor between agents. However that seems to be declining.

## APPENDIX D

## INDIVIDUAL WORK RELATED FACTORS—OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

Flexibility to be make family a part of my job although there are times when I experience the feeling that I am never "off duty" especially when your children are active in the 4-H program

I appreciate the amount of flexibilty that Extension has to offer to me to do my job.

After 30 + years, I think it all boils down to how much gradification you get from the hours who have to devote to doing the "agents" job in a respectable manner. If you feel that you are helping folks solve problems that improve their livelyhood and help youth become more responsible and productive citizens with strong values that will allow them assume leadership roles to improve our communities; then our efforts have worth and provide us with satisfaction.

I love the feedback from the citizens I serve. You never know how many people read your weekly column until you write about a topic they are interested in, and then the feedback comes pouring in. So many of my course participants have success stories (Diabetes education) and that brings great satisfaction to both the agent and the participant.

In my current position that I have held for less than a year, the workload is manageable. As someone who has been employed with Extension more than 25 years, for many CEA's, it is increasingly harder to blance the workload. Programs are continually added, but nothing is taken away.

The expectations of people in the community is that as a county agent, you are working 24 hours a day, every day. They expect you to be "on call" all the time. This job does not pay enough, to be on call, all the time. But, satisfaction or should I say, gratifying feelings come from this perspective, due to the fact that people respect you and feel that you are qualified to help them, with whatever, and whenever.

4-H work with my own child is a positive point. The work load is HELL.

The workload at times is managable, however many times there are simply unrealistic expectations from myself, my clientle and the administration.

-Professional scheduling is not practiced. If it were I feel productivity would increase and stress/frustration level would decrease. BUT Texas Cooperative Extension would have to educate the public- that should not be the CEAs responsibility. EG.- The

public never sees you leave home at 5 am (or before dawn) and return at 10 pm - whenever from work related responsibilities. Once upon a time, clientel might have been somewhat interested in the CEA as an individual - now all they are concerned with is themselves and their children winning whatever. The CEA is a 24 hr. machine.

Workload used to be ok; however, job cuts through RIFs, etc. are making us all work harder to just stay in place.

I have continued to work in Extension for reasons stated above, to try to help people in my county. I may not have big meetings all the time, but I am known as someone to call on day or night for individual services for youth, families and ag producers. At times besides being the county agent, I am the local vet, nurseryman, chemical advisor, etc.

It is nice to be recognized by clientele as an expert in certain areas. You must work hard though to earn that recognition.

I love working with children.

The flexible hours of Extension are a big asset, it should be put in the benefits package.

For #10 - IN THE FUTURE, when I do have children, I foresee that it will be a great opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H. Such a plus with this job!!

I enjoy the fact that I know so many people who live in my county. I like the fact that I can help people.

I love the people I work with, and for, but there are going to be bumps along the way and that is part of any job.

The flexible hours are available in my district but I do know of some districts where the DEA does not respect or recognize them. I would hesitate to transfer to certain districts because of the "nonflexibility and understanding" of certain DEAs. I did work for a DED, who did send warm fuzzies and recognized your accomplishments, even small ones, through notes, etc. This was a very positive action. As to the question that relates to our own children - I think our children many times pay the price for our work schedules. I do not necessarily see our 4-H work as a positive factor. There are a lot of 4-H club meetings, activities, etc. that our children are not involved in even if they are in 4-H.

It was very important for me to have my 4 children involved in 4-H Club Work. The 4-H Program is so valuable !

Professional scheduling varies from county to county as DEDs and CEDs have different ideas and expectations. Those variances in ideas and expectations cause a lot of unhappiness among agents.

My children involved in the 4-H program in my county is not exactly a good thing all the time.

I like being on the "cutting edge" of new agricultural technologies.

Another factor not mentioned above is the fact that many projects are short term and come to fruition. Each year there are projects that are being completed and phased out and being replaced by new projects and programs. However one problem that continues to loom over Extension is that many historical programs which are no longer big producers (in terms of participation or "bang for the buck") are not being phased out yet we keep adding new programs etc. to our workload.

I love to travel. Extension has given me the opportunity to go places I have never been. I also like knowing that I change people's lives. That is very rewarding.

Again, freedom of job, flexible/personal work hours,

Our programming opportunities is so diverse that no matter how good a job that we do, more could always be done. This problem may be more localized to smaller counties where I (agents) do not have the ability to specialize. This is the most frustrating part of the job, related to this area of the survey.

I truly enjoy the difference I make in other people's lives through Extension education.

I do not have the opportunity for professional scheduling, that consideration is not given. The expectation is, you are here no matter what. I do not have children and if I did, they would not participate in 4-H. Would you explain a manageable workload, in whose opinion - the agent or the supervisor?!?! I already made comments about recognition from clientele!! People who really need it and appreciate you working after hours, make it bearable.

Enjoy working with 4-H youth that are excited about the future.

I do like the fact that I can be creative in my educational efforts. I enjoy the other agents and specialists that I work with and am associated with.

I would rather have the time to spend with my children at HOME as opposed to on the job. Yes, it's important that I can take them with me, but rarely have the time to get them from their school with all of the night and weekend work that is required.

I enjoy working with my co-workers in the county and with those in other counties. I feel that in our area we do a good job of showing support to each other.

District 1 Administration does not show empathy for flexibility in work hours and wants to monitor and approve any leave. Way too much oversight for so called professionals.

The opportunity to travel is a benefit on occasion, but when it is too much in too short a time it becomes a detriment. I am frustrated that due to the workload, I do not have time to be creative, .

Flexible hours are important to me, but as the years go by and I become more successful I find that I have less and less time that is flexible.

We are told what is expected of us not what the people in our counties identify as needs. The old square peg in round holes mind set.

We do have a flexible job. But you still feel you have to be at every meeting, at work from 8 to 5 plus work weekends and evening. When I work on Saturday or evening, I don't feel I have the opportunity to compensate and not feel guilty, when I would really like to. Extension has affected my family life as my family life is somewhat dysfunctional as a result of working too many hours and not taking time to have a family.

I would have to say I have considered leaving Extension several times. The opportunities to make more money have came my way. I do have the opportunity to do things my way in Extension. Extension has made some changes in the past 18 years that I do not believe are positive for CEA's or the organization.

Because of my background I think the work I am doing is very interesting. I also like the flexiable hour and the opportunity to plan my own work schedule. I was self employed for a long time before going to work for extension. This job is very similiar in that, I can do my own thing. There are pro's and con's to "professional scheduling". Sometimes this means you lose family time on a weekend, or weeknight, but other times it means you have worked that extra time and can take time to attend an event for your child or take care of something you need to get done. If not for the relationships with others in the same field, the job would not be nearly as satisfying.

My co-workers for the most part are great to work with, with few exceptios we have had very good working relations. Personal life and work life are kept quite seperate for me this has been my decision for years and has worked well for me.

I enjoy the variety of topics and audiences that I address.

I feel that Extension **REQUIRES** things that take us away from our county and county residents too much of the time. I strive every day to balance this and it is a constant stress.

It is not a 8-5 job by any means, but the flexibility does help with the 10-12 hour days which is the norm for most agents. Workload is very heavy at times, especially reporting, computer use, evaluations, etc. Too many reports seem to duplicated in all that we keep up with. Rural county agents have a heavier work load than urban agents due to having AG, NR, 4-H, CD, and other responsibilities.

This is a great job. The workload can be unweildy at times, but goal-setting and focusing on what is important can help alleviate that.

In the past several years I have not found the workload to be manageable and it seems to become less manageable each year, however the satisfaction of knowing that the educational programming provided by Extension is needed and worthwhile to the clientele is a positive reason to continue as an Extension employee.

I like that from time to time our schedule can be flexible. I like working with the people in the County.

I enjoy having the freedom to be creative in progamming efforts.

Certain times of the years are tough in terms of workloads, seems like there are a lot of deadlines during stock show season.

By not having any children, I've been able to stay and do lots of things that other Agents can't afford to do. I'd be broke by now if I had had kids because my salary isn't good.

TAE4-HA and NAE4-HA opportunities make a BIG positive difference in my career!

Both my children received college scholarships related to their 4-H work.

Working with youth

Few jobs give one the opportunity for professional development the TCE does.

I am neutral on manageable workload because right now I feel overloaded and do not have as much personal time as in the past or time I need to be productive. I don't mind going the extra mile but it has been like this 2-3 years and I am ready for a lighter load but don't know when that will happen. If I were a young agent I might want to look elsewhere. Those with families really have a struggle.

Making the day-to-day decisions on how to address local needs. Working on needs that I have the skills to make a difference. I am the local expert on many topics important to people in this area.

The workload is becoming increasingly more difficult to manage, it is far more difficult now to find time off than it was just a few years ago.

Have many opportunities to express creativity and to develop work-related hobbies and interests

I enjoy working with people in a variety of topics related to family and consumer sciences. The rewards I get from the youth and adults that participate and gain something from my programming is worthwhile.

Developing programming that meets the needs of the community by using my skills and knowledge in the family and consumer sciences field.

I continue to learn and grow myself in all related subject matter areas. I have also become skilled on the computer through self teaching.

Manageable workloads are uncommon among County Agents. Extension seems to get more and more involved in areas beyond the scope of what most people think that an Agent is. For example, I live in a rural area that is very traditional. Thank goodness. They do not want any part

of the new areas that Extension is getting themselves into. I'm sure that many things are budget driven.

Again I still love the work and making a difference but benefits and retirement still are the reason.

Workload is not manageable if you want to meet all the desires of clientele and still feel that you are an excellent agent.

Enjoyable career with interesting tasks. We were able to feel we make a difference in the lives of people. I wish we could still be proud that we make a difference in the lives of youth. I feel as though our administration is not very supportive of 4-H programs especially livestock projects.

Freedom from the same old thing everyday.

Work load is a concern, our work schedules are flexible but what does it matter if we have so much to manage and do that we can not afford to be flexible for fear of not complying with our job duties. Let us do what we are good at and what traditionally clientele want us to do for them. We can just do so much till we or at least I feel we are just generalists and not proficient in a few disciplines.

Personal situations (spouses job/own home/age/etc...)

Extension needs to focus on "what we do" and not be off in so many other areas. No one can be competent in so many different areas.

The work load for Extension is not always manageable if you do all that is expected (especially in 2 agent counties). After 20 something years with Extension I learned to say no on some things and to place my family above other people. Extension used to train us to work 24-7 if we would. I finally learned that I could be replaced if I died or got sick or left my job, therefore, I started taking better care of myself and actually starting being just about as effective as I was prior to that. I really like the opportunities in Extension but sometimes I feel as though I am paying to go to work because so much of it comes out of my own pocket. I have found my loyalty to the people as much or more than the agency because they are who it is all about. They have given back to me in recognition and respect in invaluable ways. It is all about them.

I like being able to help people and see that the help that is given makes a difference in peoples lives.

Workload is manageable about half the time; the other time it is overwhelming and creates a high level of stress. The other factors listed in the chart above help to compensate for those stressful times. My child was in Scouts and soccer at his request rather than in 4-H - hence, the response to question 10.

I strongly agree that opportunities for professional development, and for travel are outstanding within Extension. One very negative factor for me is that each year, the workload seems to become more difficult. This is an inherant problem that has no easy solution, but that needs to be addressed by Administration. The diversity of the state further makes solving this problem difficult. Maybe it could be handled better on a regional level.

The variety and flexibilty of Extension has always appealed to me more than spending day after day in a classroom.

Manageable work load is hard to balance all of your agriculture programming and then inheriting a 4-H program. In this county we lost our 4-H position which is the second most valuable position in the county b/c you are impacting and molding youths lives.

Extension says that it is family oriented; however, if your child is in 4-H they are always penalized because your parent is a CEA. Your parents are never able to see you perform or in a contest because they have to be somewhere else.

This is the most important aspect of our work, not the pay, recogition, etc.

Through my 5 1/2 years w/ Extension, I agree with all of the above, with the exception of the opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H.



There are principles in the 4-H program that I DO NOT agree with; and having to deal with so much 4-H, and at times so much controversy w/ 4-H parents (not 4-H youth), I don't want to expose my own family to 4-H. If I ever do, it will be very limited. So much of 4-H now seems to be for the parents' benefit and personal enjoyment.

Flexible scheduling is a major plus for me. It allows me to be actively involved in areas of my job that extend to areas of community development. These activities are a lot of times done during business hours. Flexible scheduling also helps me to balance my work and family load.

Respected position in the community/county

I have enjoyed the creativity and flexibility. The workload has been ridiculous.

Having your children involved in 4-H can sometimes be a disadvantage.

I look forward to a comfortable retirement.

Flex time is critical to me. As a parent of 3 I need to attend to their needs while not worrying about losing my job.

The demand on Extension agents continues to increase. We continue to take on new initiatives, try to do it all and we have not discontinued other programming obligations. I have stayed because I had the opportunity to move to a higher level county and get involved with a program that better utilized my education and programming skills. I have been allowed to specialize in JMG but I have to work harder to accomplish all the other duties expected in order to support the team effort of the county office.

## APPENDIX E

## INDIVIDUAL NON—WORK RELATED FACTORS—OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

Extension is a noble but dying profession. Much of what extension has done in the past is being taken over or offered by private companies or as part of product services.

If an agent is doing their job performance and meeting the needs of a county, there is very little time to pursue other business/financial opportunities. Respect from community leaders and their acknowledgement of resources Extension can bring to the community has been a factor in my choice of staying with Extension

My work through Extension has given me lots of opportunities to work with other county leaders.

For some reason I can not access question 10b so I am responding in this slot. I was looking at leaving because of salary and convenience. The salary was three times what I receive from extension and it had full benefits (medical and dental for me and family with a retirement package) with nothing being deducted from the salary for these benefits. It also had a house with all expenses paid except long distance phone, a vehicle allowance and an annual bonus that was a minimum of \$2,000. The down side was the long hours during the months of late-September through early-January. Other than those months the hours were very flexible. At the time I applied and interviewed, my wife was driving back and forth to school every day, one hour each way, and this move would have cut her drive time in half.

I was under the impression outside business/financial ventures were taboo; however, I am aware of CEA AG that some manage to do this even on Extension time.

If you have the mind set that our work and mission as County Agents is very similar to that of a Minister serving a parish or congregation. At that point you realize that you are in your chosen profession not for its money earning potential, but instead for the service to humanity that will eventually provide a just reward for all your efforts and personal sacrifices. Agents who have this philosophy are satisfied with their jobs and self-motivated to improving their performance. These Agents don't worry about the small stuff. They go out and get the job done for the people they have been hired to serve. ( P. S.> Sorry about not getting to this survey sooner.)

Networking in our county is very strong. I have a good working relationship with many agencies and we refer people to each other as the need arises. Because the

newspaper publishes our pictures with each agent's column, we get a lot of community recognition when we are in the public.

Meeting new people.

This job allows me to be on the cutting edge of community development.

Galen, I couldn't enter anything in 10B so I'm entering it here. I applied for other jobs due to dissatisfaction with previous supervisor who I felt was unfair, and I couldn't trust, and unrealistic in expectations (she had been out of the county too long and had never worked in a large county so she had no business giving advice about programming in an urban setting - in my opinion anyway!).

I enjoy being able to interpret the importance of agriculture to elected officials. I do not enjoy the politics of county government budget challenges.

Extension has allowed me to become more proficient in my knowledge of various categories.

Being involved in the Community is very important to me. My Dad, a 4-H volunteer, always taught me to "give-back" to our community.

What opportunity for outside business and financial interests ????

I think outside financial interests have created problems for some staff in not putting their job first!!!!!!!

I cannot speak for all other agents but I simply do not have any extra time to dedicate to outside business/financial interests. One follow-up question that would be interesting to note would replace question 02 Part IV below: 02a. Marital status (current) 02b. Marital Status (when you joined Extension). I for one would be interested in those stats. Another factor that should be noted in this survey is that for all of the aforementioned benefits and reasons agents choose to stay with this great organization, we must never forget that salaries do and will continue to play a vital role in the decision of every agent about whether they will stay with Extension or seek employment elsewhere. Benefits are a definite plus but it must be backed up with competitive salaries as well.

This is the least important area of the survey for me.

It's difficult to be a contributor to certain areas within the community when Extension administration will not support those endeavors, i.e. stock show boards. I was informed through my Extension 4-H specialist that it was strongly discouraged for agents to serve on show boards. Who will represent 4-H interests if that is not allowed?

I enjoy working in the community.

Extension agents should not be involved in outside employment, especially if it relates to stock show animals. Agents raising show animals for sale is an extreme conflict of interest.

This job is what you make of it. If you want to strive for mediocrity then you can with little or no reverberation from your supervisors. If you want to strive for excellence, then the sky is the limit. I guess what I am saying is that this job fits a wide variety of people and their specific ambitions.

Agents live in glass houses all their extension lives. We are under constant peer pressure. Many tenured agents stay only because of the benefit package. They are too old to be a viable candidate for most jobs.

I love what I do and I enjoy working with people.

The professional development opportunities to help me be more knowledgeable has helped to make me a more confident agent. I also appreciate the recognition as a professional and enjoy the opportunity to work with leaders in our community.

I choose to keep my work and my personal life very separate. While we do each of these items listed, they are far from what keeps me in the profession. I am not in it so people know who I am, or so I can say I worked closely with someone of importance in the community. I find that the status of the profession in the community is sometimes more of a drawback, when for example, you can not even attend church on Sunday without being bombarded with gardening questions!

The first year I lived within the county, currently I live in another county because of my husband's employment situation to be a little closer for his traveling.

I believe that there is too much liberty offered some agents who are in the stock breeding/buying business. How do they have time to adequately fulfill their job responsibilities? When it comes to district level responsibilities, some of us other agents are carrying our load as well as theirs.

This answer is for # 10b. of which would not allow me to write in that box. Seriously looked and applied for other jobs due to the fact that there is no end to the work and we were told we could not flex time. Thus, work is typically 60 - 80 hours per week and my family is tired of it, kids are nearly gone and work demands are as great or greater than ever. Other agencies have 4 day weeks, 40 hour weeks, comp time, over time, etc. The work hours are the biggest drain on an agent and his/her family.

I can't imagine having time for outside business/financial interests if you are doing what A&M puts forth for us to do, especially if you do not have 4-H, horticulture agents etc. in your county.

I never felt that Extension encouraged outside business interest.

I do enjoy the professional and personal relationships that are formed through the direct contact of the community.

Workload severely limits opportunity for outside business interests at certain times of the year.

Contacts made through my work would not be possible if I were not employed by TCE. This is a great reward of the job. I have been given the opportunity to speak to groups and make friends and contacts that I otherwise would not have if not employed by TCE.

I do not understand how one can have outside business interest and still do their job as effectively as needed!

I STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement about "opportunity for outside business/financial interests." I have been approached many times about a "part-time" or "side-line" job. I don't feel that my Extension job gives me that opportunity. TIME is not available with unpredictable night and weekend 4-H events and activities. There is no time for another job after using any available free time for paying bills, housework, yard work, etc. I realize that many agents raise and sell livestock for extra income--I can see where this would be a conflict of interest.

Also the fact that I'm too close to retirement. Question 10.b. wouldn't let me enter information so my answer follows here: I thought about leaving Extension because I've felt that I had lost control of the job (due to so many irons in the fire) and was unable to perform the quality of work that I demand of myself.

I have enjoyed a long and productive career in Extension and the recognition I receive from former 4-Hers and clientele is rewarding.

It seems there is now less opportunity for personal growth and far less personal time.

Feeling of "belonging" in community

Extension has given me a great opportunity to develop myself as a person and as a professional through a variety of opportunities, trainings and programs.

Status and involvement in the community has varied from positions in more rural counties to current work in very urban counties. Good and bad aspects to both experiences.

I have the opportunity to judge many youth livestock shows. That is what I love to do most. Extension is a great organization to allow this type of activity.

Based on current salaries professional status is all that is available to the agent. As income decreases and the agent's ability to live comfortably within a community declines, the agent's status also declines in the eyes of clientele. Current salaries require great personal sacrifice and the necessity of a 2 wage household. The position is being viewed more as a job not a profession, based on the economic abilities of the agent within the county.

We should not have to worry about outside business interests if we would get paid enough to concentrate on our job duties. If things stay the same we are going to have to look for part time work or other types of business interests so things can dollar out. I work with every one that needs help or wants as service we provide from Extension, in some cases some of these community leaders are not worth working with. I like that we work with the people that want help and need help.

Extension has finally realized that we may "have" to develop other business interests and we finally have more freedom to develop these to further our business abilities and to supplement our income. I personally have enjoyed working with businesses, key leaders and community leaders. It is helpful in keeping in touch with the communities in the county. I have been treated with favor because of the respect I have obtained through my job. I like that my job is not just an office job and that I can work in all types of situations and environments.

I really enjoy helping our clients make a difference in their lives.

When time allows, it is nice that many in the community look to us for help and guidance. Unfortunately, there aren't any more hours in the day/week, and I am starting to dread those calls.

If you are doing a your job it is extremely difficult to have outside opportunities with a outside business. Personal Growth is limited due to the workload that must be taken care of on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. If you did not have a masters degree when hired it would be difficult to make time for continuing your education.

As for an opportunity for outside business/financial interests, I can't agree with that as many other agents could. Those agents who focus on one particular subject such as horticulture, marine, agriculture, etc. may have the time to have opportunity for outside businesses. Those agents who have dual roles with agriculture and 4-H (such as myself), have actually less opportunity outside to Extension to pursue other financial interests.

I get a major sense of pride when working through Extension with key community leaders.

One of the biggest problems with extension is that we have too many supervisors and especially administrators have no clue how good or bad their agents are. There "performance" is based on their writing skills and how much time they spend "tooting" their own horn. Extension is to blame for encouraging this type performance. I have had district agents and currently have one that takes enough time and effort to see beyond the written word. It would seem that if that is priority we could hire specialist that find good programs and do the writing for agents who spend their time actually working.

There is not enough time in the day to have another job when you work for Extension. Even though we have a flexible schedule we almost always put in more than 40 hours a week. Community work and community support is very fulfilling.

There has been absolutely NO time for outside interests while employed with TCE.

I want to give and not just take from my community.

I didn't know we were allowed to use our status as county extension agents to promote our outside business and financial interests!

The opportunities for personal growth are limited by the opportunities you are hand picked for and the time that must be devoted to the POW. There is not time to own a business or have outside interests. I question the ethics of some of the ways agents have used the contacts they have developed through Extension to support what I consider questionable "outside" interests. The opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders is limited to the time you have and the time they have and the time they already devote to other key people in the community. The opportunity to contribute to the community is the number one reason, interact with teachers, get into the trenches and put your finger on the pulse of how testing is impacting our schools, funding and teachers. Extension Agents have an opportunity to work directly with problems that impact communities and that make my job interesting and challenging.

## APPENDIX F

REASONS FOR SERIOUSLY THINKING OF LEAVING EXTENSION FOR  
ANOTHER JOB OPPORTUNITY—OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

Less evening and weekend work

kkkkBetter Pay

I have thought about it, but probably not seriously enough yet.

Money, Money, Money. The pride and prestige only take you so far.

To better meet with personal goals and family needs

Money....

More pay and less hours of work and more time with my family

Tired of unfairness in organization

Opportunity

I left Extension to go into mission work in 1981 and rehired in 1998 after not being able to return to the mission field. Since being rehired I have considered leaving in order to concentrate on one subject matter and not be pulled in many directions at the same time. In Extension, the agent is a generalist, that in and of itself can get tough, i.e., trying to know a little bit about alot and not knowing alot about any one thing. I do not work well with alot of things going on at one time.

Please note in question 5, my present title is not listed. If I was not suppose to complete this survey please disregard. Thanks.

The work load and expected results (numbers of people) are unrealistic most of the time. There is no expectation of having time with your own family because you have to be everything to your clintele at all times. These issues are given lip service by administration but that is about all.

For more money and less hours.



Long Hours with little reward, especially financially. Administration still expects too much and causes burnout with tedious requirements. The demand on our time is too high and truly does take away from families, has even broken some up. People don't mind working long hours, but those that really go the extra mile should be recognized with more vacation time or financially.

Salary. Salaries of mid-career agents continue to fall behind similar occupations. Administration continues to do nothing about this problem and seem to care only about starting salaries/early career agents and administrative positions.

Better pay and benefits and to keep from having to relocate.

Yes, I have explored other opportunities. The main reason for leaving is to try to better my family. Many jobs are available here in my county that pay more. However, I do enjoy serving and working with the people. The relationships that are built don't pay any bills but you do receive self pride in helping others.

I left to stay home with my children and substitute taught.

More money.

I am seeking jobs related to my educational level and field of expertise.

Pay and workload.

More money, less hours, more family time, less paperwork, less responsibilities, more freedom.

Co-worker conflict, lack of management to recognize problem in Extension

I hated the county that I was previously in and did not want to raise my child there. The DED was great and there was a great deal of support from her. The clients in the county were extremely competitive and very intimidating.

Better salary and equal benefits

Higher Salary, Stress, Work Over-load, More time to spend with my family

Opportunity to own a business which fell through shortly after

Better money

Lack of financial recognition for the hours that I work and lack of recognition for a job well-done by supervisors. The 'politics' of being told you are doing a great job and then being passed over for the highest amounts of money when merit raises come around.

Lack of opportunity for advancement without having a Master's degree and lack of tuition reimbursement programs at A&M for Extension faculty who wish to pursue a Master's at A&M. Budgetary problems at home due to salary shortfalls at work.

Didn't believe I was being treated fairly in my old county.

Number 1. For family reasons and 2. Concern for the future of this organization.

I briefly left Extension early in my career due to a conflict of salary quote when moving to a new county from a late District Agent and State Agent.

Salary and location

More money

At points when time away from home seemed to be more than I wanted to deal with and when I had my feelings hurt over a promotion. I still have a hard time finding another career that I would enjoy more.

Teaching at junior college

I feel that it is my duty to try to better provide for my family. Not only would I be able to make more money, I am getting more concerned with the time I am getting to spend with my family. The work load keeps getting heavier and there are certainly not any rewards coming with them. I want to be a team player and I do understand that we must have state initiatives and program for them, but some things coming down from the upper level get overwhelming, especially when our greatest concern should be serving and meeting the needs of our local constituents.

I have applied for other jobs and have been offered other jobs, but the benefits and flexible hours have kept me with extension.

Questioning my future...considering other careers that require specialization. However, I am no longer considering them. Occasionally, the long hours and weekends get "old," but I always tend to "bounce back."

I taught school for 10 years when our child was 4-14.

More time with my family/Less travel/More pay/More respect from Administrators or people doing the hiring.

Left Extension to allow husband to expand his career. Returned 4 years later.

I enjoy my work when it involves working with the clientele, but when I have NO time to do things that I want to do personally (and believe me I would like to), it is hard to want to continue in that type of work environment. Most of my weekends and nights are totally taken up by meetings, stock shows, camps, meetings, and many other facets of the job. It is also hard for me to want to continue working for an organization that does not give promotions based on job performance but rather on, can I write a bunch of words on a document that sounds really good and what kissing up to my supervisor have I done to get a promotion, because the merit raises given at the beginning of the year were NOT based on job performance, but on tenure and this little bit of money will increase the last three years of salary for retirement. I am tired of the lies and so-called miscommunication that continues to occur within the administration in the entire organization and not just in the immediate supervision.

More Money

Job stability, less travel, less responsibility

Pay increase...work schedules...prestige of position...I have applied for and interviewed several times. The benefits and pay were outstanding. The reason I have not left is because my family situation demands occasional leave. In a new position, the leave would not be available.

Similar hours and 2-3X salary

For more money!!!!!!!!!!

Outstanding job offers in related fields.

Extension was not willing to work with my need to relocate to another area of the state due to my husband's employment.

Not enough pay for my education level compared to other Ag Industry Jobs. Worried about job security with changes in extension, and the worry of the leadership in Extension.

Inability to find work for my wife at the time in the county in which I worked.

A job opportunity came up very close to where I live that offered a much higher salary, company vehicle, and a lighter work load. This was attractive because at the time I was recently married and was struggling to pay off monthly bills and school loans.

Different location;

At one point I did consider leaving Extension. I have been in three districts and have had only one negative experience; but that experience was so negative that I was willing to leave an agency that I loved. I had a supervisor that I did not feel was supportive which made my job very difficult. I changed districts and have no more problems. I really do enjoy what I do and feel this is a wonderful organization. However, there are times that I feel administration does not recognize when a district director is not working out well. When this happens, morale plummets and people leave Extension.

I have thought about leaving Extension for several reasons. Being a CEA, 4-H our job is VERY demanding and takes a tremendous amount of time away from home and our families. This and the lack of pay increases, and a higher rate of pay for the job we do have all been factors in my thoughts.

To achieve more balance in my life as far as family/work.

Salary, workload and opportunities.

Dissatisfaction with supervisor.

The "spirit" of extension is leaving and the reason for why I got in is not the same. I no longer feel that the top administrator are supporting us in the counties.

In order: 1)Reduced stress, 2)Ability to leave work at work (i.e.- non-salary), 3)Shorter hours at work / more personal time 4)Better pay 5) To leave the community

I seriously thought about leaving Extension to go back to school for another career field about 8 years ago.

To focus on one subject matter

More money.

As a young agent I seriously considered leaving extension because of time demands, it cost me one marriage. I determined then that I would not let that happen again. I have been in Extension in three different states, Texas is the most directing and gives the least recognition to agents for their efforts.

Increased pay with less hours

I have not applied but have given very serious thought and consideration. Had it not been for civil service retirement I would have. The agency is not loyal to the very people that has made it successful. The last one's to get a salary increase is county staff and they are the life's blood of this organization. Politics influences what gets done.

To be closer to family. In order to not have to work as much and get more pay.  
Job insecurity.

Money, Opportunity for advancement, getting involved in production agriculture

Financial rewards.

Salary! Most teachers in my area of the state make at least \$5000 more than I do a year with fewer hours. And many of these teachers are newly hired straight from college. I have had 8 years with Extension and I think my salary should be more. And yes, I do work! I have been recognized across the state by specialists, DED's (DEA's, and peers for the work I do! I receive 'exceeds expectations' on my performance appraisals however the salary does not match my performance.

Job stress due to an unsupportive supervisor (now retired), in addition to better pay and less work hours.

Workload and low pay.

More money and not so much paper work to fill out!

No, I haven't applied for other jobs, but I have seriously thought about it. The paper trail that is required is sometimes totally ignorant. I have worked for private industry for many years and have NEVER been required to do as many time wasting reports as I have since I have been employed by TCE. Working with the public and making a positive impact in their lives and livelihoods should be the most important aspect of this job.

About 8 years ago I was pretty frustrated and seriously thought about it but never took action. I did quit Extension after 4 years because of difficulty balancing work and family. I went from single to married with 2 kids in less than 3 years. However, after trying the stay at home mom thing and self employment I was fortunate to be able to come back and have been in for 19 years. It is the career for me but not for everyone.

I was tired and exhausted from the work schedule and wanted a 40 hour week for more money.

Salary and work load.

occasionally an opportunity arises that could be a little hard to pass up. Whether it be money, an opportunity to do something you'd really like to do or what ever. When those situations occur I think you have to take a look at them seriously, in order to make the best decision for you and your family.

Financial

Better pay scale. Tired of top down programming and top heavy administration. The last re-organization was not a good idea. Extension agents are now pulled in three different directions to score points for RPDs and DEDs. If Extension hires the right people and pays them well, one DED is enough. No RPDs would be needed.

Mainly because my spouse & I both work for extension in different counties (same district) & coordination will be hard once we have children & taking advantage of opportunities to move is hard when two people may want to do it working for the same organization

I worked five years as CEA and got out, then returned one year later, due to missing the things the job offered. After leaving the first time, I decided to come back and retire with my life vested in Extension.

No advancement available for better positions within the county in which you are working in presently. Unfairness of supervisor in scoring of performance review.

I wanted a more reasonable workload with less weekend and evening work.

Smoking in office

I had been in the same job for 13 years, needed a new challenge (was bored), and was being passed over for hiring into a different job within my same county. I applied for a coordinator job at a local community college and was in the final interview round of 2 candidates; this job was offered before they offered the community college job to either applicant. It would have been similar work. On question 09a, I have worked more than one position within the same county. I was a Non-program leader agent and now then became a program leader. The work I was doing was CEA-4-H, but we didn't have that title in our county at that time.

Not I have looked into other career opportunities. I think it is important to remain sharp and informed as to what is out there for professionals in my field. I feel that if I never looked 'outside of my extension box' I would be useless to extension and the people I serve. I also wanted to find something that offered fewer work hours to free up personal time that would allow me to have a normal life outside of work.

Financial and because of time constraints. This goes back to the age old complaint. Extension agents are the only state agency that does not allow comp. time. We are expected to work 8-5 and nights and weekends.

It's a matter of what comes first, the chicken or the egg? The role of the chicken and egg in Extension has changed in the past 30 years. At one time, the grass roots level

(county staff) was the 'chicken', with the administration the 'egg'... Not so today, now the chicken is administration and the egg is the county staff. What do I mean by this? In my opinion, today we are too top heavy with administration and too short handed with those that is the key to expanding Extension - county staffs. Plus, my opinion of the Career Ladder is a joke when it comes to working for me... In addition, I once justify my being in Extension by telling myself (and family) that the Extension's Benefit package and job security overcame the "lack of salary" for my experience and expertise. However, my opinion about Extension had a major relapse this past year after seeing the direction administration took to "trim the budget" by cutting Extension's grass root positions, cutting my family be

Work for Federal Gov.

Increased salary, better benefits, less days away from home & family, fewer nights and weekend work.

I have looked for jobs that pay better and have also looked because of job stress due to co workers and 4-H.

-Low pay scale for amount of years served, while agents with fewer years served are making more money than I. -Dissatisfaction with administration's decisions regarding the new administration alignment, etc.

Better pay, lighter workload, no weekend or night work would allow more time with family, better insurance

Job stress and work load. Co-worker at the time was a stressful issue. At times the work load in Extension is overwhelming. The time for rest and vacation at times are impossible.

For more money mainly. Also, although I like people and take pride in helping them, sometimes their complaining and griping gets on my nerves. Also, when I plan an activity and nobody shows up.

Mainly financial, being married with two children, and living in an urban area, it really takes more income to be financially stable. Many of the opportunities came in the first several years after I was employed from Ag Industry, but I passed knowing that there was much uncertainty in that field. However, I also look at the time I have invested in the organization and ability to retire when reaching age of 55 and then maybe doing other work for some time to build up some equity.

I was very unhappy in a county I was working in. There were issues with a 4-H leader that was never ending and constant conflict with a supervisor. Along with personal issues that I was faced with at the time, I felt very overwhelmed and could not see the light at the end of the tunnel. Luckily, a position came open in a different county and district and I was able to move and remove myself from those work issues.

Better opportunities and personal subject matter interest.

Due To the traveling we do for stockshows, camp, meetings, and trainings. Being away from my young child and husband is very hard on all of us. My family is more important than a career right now. Being able to have more time with family and able to be around for those milestones my child is making is very important to me as an individual.

Acute bureaucrophobia.

Salary and work schedule.

Salary. Salary. Salary

Fed up with the increasing demands of the job.

Job demands often interfere with family. Spouse has had serious illness and I'd like to spend more time with them, such as the old saying "Life is too short."

The sad part of this is that I like my job and have enjoyed it for many years. This is not the first time these questions have been asked and it is not the first time these answers have been given –makes you wonder if anybody is listening. Extension work does not allow a complete personal/family life. Although we can often arrange our daytime schedule, when we take an evening or Saturday for personal/family reasons our clientele wonder why we are not at the 4-H meeting or activity. This issue often goes beyond the acceptable point. The overall workload and job responsibilities assignments often get out of hand during certain times of the year. We tend not to remove programming responsibilities during our annual review efforts, we only add more each year. When the topic of reducing programming responsibilities is opened, we as field staff are often made to feel that we are not doing or giving 100%.

Conflict with former District Director who is now gone , it was a very unpleasant time in my extension career. He is now gone - I am not.

Too much bureaucracy, reports, paperwork.

1. To pursue further education. 2. Because the work/travel load is large-- eventually I will want to marry and have children, which will be difficult to do with my current Extension responsibilities.

I was asked to consider going to work for another outfit

Dis-satisfaction with co-workers as well as difficult clientele (i.e. 4-H parents)

Less work and more money.



Better salary and promotion opportunities.

More personal time, more money, advancement

With the career advancement system that is in place, I will never go anywhere in this field. I cannot move because my family is here, my husband's job is here, and I do not have the time nor the financial means to obtain my masters degree. There are other careers available that can also provide flexibility, better compensate and give me more time with my family.

Salary increase, and Family

The grass was greener on the other side and still is greener on the other side, but I truly enjoy making a difference in people's lives and will sacrifice money to be happy.

I wanted an 8 to 5 job.

This job is 24 hours a day 7 days a week. And there is never any down time.

I needed to move to another part of the state due to family crisis - need to care for aging parents. TCE Administration could have cared less about this need.

I have not actually applied for any other jobs. However, as I stated earlier, I am very concerned about the future of Extension. I am worried about it's existence as well as the direction it is going. For example, I have a Bachelor and Masters degree in Animal Science. I feel uncomfortable trying to educate people in subject matter that has nothing to do with my expertise. I know we need to change to meet clientele needs, but how far do we go and for what reasons?

Wife and I agreed that supervisors inability to support agents, with male prejudious by FCS DED, \$-H families cheating on animals and recordbooks. Retirement with crcs and orp is still primary reason for staying with Extension.

Fewer hours, less demanding schedule, fewer responsibilities, fewer night and weekend activities, better pay and benefits

Working for federal or state agencies seem to be a dead end road. The state's budget situation is not improving which will cause Extension's budget to shrink and cause hardship in the future. State and Federal employees are viewed in some of the publics perception as a class of Welfare recipients.

Pressures from disgruntled parents and the lack of support from Administration who were involved by these same parents; the continued paper-work as placed upon Agents from mid and upper-level Administrators and required District trainings which

require Agents to be out of County; Salary is well below other State Agency levels which demand less of employees than CES.

#### Co-Worker Relationship.

Better pay by most any other career choice. We are way behind and some are going to be making less than new employees because of the starting salaries now ,which is good however some of us in the middle need some type of adjustment to survive.

More income, better hours (8 to 5)

Better paying , less demanding, not night and weekend work, more specific work.

Higher salary

Better opportunities. Tired of the hassle of 4-H and other weekend and night demands.... Many DED's and administrators seem to loose touch with true county agent work. But after looking at my retirement....I can not afford to leave now.

I felt that I have not been treated fairly by adminstration and they have not been truthful in certain matters.

Last years anticipated RIF made me aggressively look for other opportunities.

The main reason is working nights and weekends. My husband needed to move and no Extension job was available, so I left Extension.

Better pay

My salary with Extension is quite a bit lower than I can make in industry. I am strongly considering another occupation to help me in my retirement.

Sizable salary increase

Money, tired of conflict management, missing my children grow up, too many nights and weekends away from home when I should be watching my kids play sports, etc., no personal life away from the office, too many late night and early morning phone calls, not being able to always help my own kid with their animal project because I'm paid to help everyone else, and stress and time away has directly influenced spousal relationship.

Under the current system agents with 6-10 years of service have been penalized for choosing to stay in one county and not move every two years. With the current career ladder, those agents with 5 years in at first ranking that were put in as level 2 agents have

to wait until they have 10 years in to receive any type of substantial increase in salary if it's available even then. Many in this time frame (6-10 yrs) have seen starting salaries increase to a point that those who have stayed in a county without moving are being overlooked and under valued.

Lack of support from administration on county level.

Other jobs offered less workload requirements, no weekend job responsibilities, higher compensation and a lack of supervisor support. Work schedule and pay schedule. Extension does not reward those who work hardest. The harder you work the more time you spend away from home and the more meetings you have. Agents get raises due to years of service and not performance. It is a good job, with the ability to make a difference, but at what cost to ourselves and our families.

Money....

Lack of personal time and time with family; co-worker

Higher take-home pay, and less demanding workload. The primary reasons for staying employed with Extension have been 1) better job stability than within industry, and 2) an excellent benefits program. As stated earlier, the benefits program is much less competitive now than 2 years ago.

You want to be able to diversify your background and have other opportunities with the corporate world. One of the factors is a "key" is that your hours and workload or overwhelming, and when you do take vacation you come back and continuously playing catch up. The work balance and the diversity you must know when your clientele just makes you feel ignorant when you do not know all the answers.

Salary

Better income (salary).

I have looked at other jobs for higher pay and less accountability. I feel that if my county is pleased with the job I do then that should be enough. Not that if I get this outcome program done and show a 25% increase in producer profit then it is a success. Extension to me is education. We put the information out there and if they chose to use it, then that is their choice.

Difficulty balancing Extension and Family time. Lack of recognition from administration. Personal stress and controversy related to 4-H.

I was worried about job security during our last "RIF" and looked into teaching. I was offered a position but turned it down when looking at the benefits of the school district. I also didn't know if I could conform to regimented scheduling and teaching to a test. I was relieved when my position was spared.

Increasing work load and # of boss's.

Salary.

money

married and moved to other location, had to seek other employment

Money and the demanding schedule if you want to be a top agent becomes unrealistic because the more you do the more that they want you to do until you finally cannot handle it or in most cases you start doing a less than effective job because you end up half ass doing parts of your job so you can get everything done. Agents are asked to be experts in everything by the public but also by administration, but specialist will tell you right quick that that is not their area and it may be close but they are not expected to go out of their way to find out, but we are.

For better pay and shorter hours

Better pay, location

I was previously in a 4-H position and the work hours and expectations were tremendous. This put pressure on my family life and I did not have much time for my two small children. If I was going to put in that many hours I felt like I needed to be compensated better. However, I do love my job and I hated to leave therefore I transferred into a better situation.

During the recent budget crisis, I was assigned a second county in which to work. No compensation was awarded. I am still in a level 3 position and have two commissioner's court to please. I have checked employment options with our local hospital and ISD. What has kept me on-board is the sacrifice that I would make in retirement benefits. I have been most disappointed that my performance has always been superior and I am a Level 4 agent and was asked to take the brunt of the budget cuts for this district. I have never received a thank you letter from the administrative staff for assuming this extra load with no compensation. I believe to be a poor way to treat employees.

Spouse's job and he went back to college. Also to get closer to a college for MS.

Higher Salary.

To have available weekends to spend with family not trying to keep everyone else's children happy instead of my own.

I'm not sure if I actually "left" Extension. After receiving my masters, I was unable to move to a higher paying position within Extension. As a result, I applied for a

position with the Department of Defense who contracted with Extension for me to work on a special Army project in Washington, D.C. for a couple of years.

ENP office closed in 1977. I was owner/operator of a quilt/design company for 3 years after ENP. and also did private nutritional counseling with a National Franchise for 12 years (1980--1991) before returning to Extension.

Money and an environment with better defined rules and objectives.

Frustration that no matter how hard I work, there is always more that could be done or it could be done better. Frustration of being able to go in one direction long enough to really accomplish something worthwhile. Frustration with being pulled in too many directions. Seeing Extension lose effectiveness due to dwindling resources and still trying to do more with less, and not setting priorities in programming areas at the administrative level. Not being able to get the help we need when we need it.

Lack of opportunity for advancement, lack of opportunity for salary increases that keep pace with inflation, and generally and the lack of job security.

.Single line supervision!

## VITA

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## Educational background:

EdD- Agricultural Education, Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University, August 2004

M.S.T.-Agriculture, Tarleton State University, May 1988

B.S.-Animal Science, Texas A&M University, May 1980

## Professional experience:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 2003-present | District Extension Administrator, Texas Cooperative Extension, Vernon, Texas. Recruits, selects, supervises, and trains county Extension agents-agriculture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H, and horticulture in District 3, Rolling Plains. |
| 1996-2003    | District Extension Director-Agriculture, Texas Cooperative Extension, Vernon, Texas. Recruits, selects, supervises, and trains county Extension agents-agriculture, 4-H, and horticulture in District 3, Rolling Plains.                        |
| 1992-1996    | County Extension Agent-agriculture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Denton County, Denton, Texas. Agricultural program leader and county coordinator.   |
| 1987-1992    | County Extension Agent-agriculture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Wise County, Decatur, Texas. Agricultural program leader, trainer agent, and county coordinator.  |
| 1983-1987    | County Extension Agent-agriculture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Comanche County, Comanche, Texas. Agricultural program leader. county coordinator, and 4-H program coordinator.   |
| 1980-1983    | County Extension Agent-agriculture (assistant), Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Atascosa County, Jourdanton, Texas. 4-H program coordinator.  |